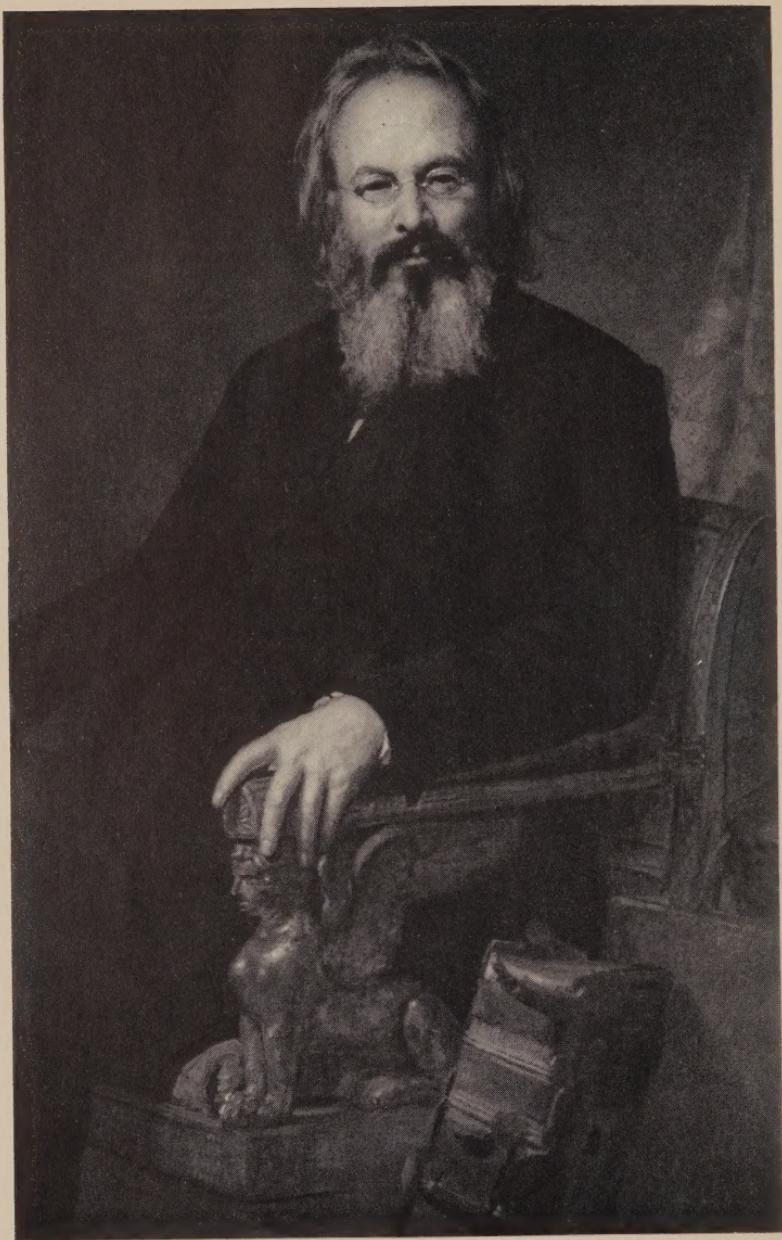


B908  
B64W55





GRANITE FOR  
GOD'S HOUSE



LIBRARY OF PRINCETON  
THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY  
DEC 5 1941

# GRANITE FOR GOD'S HOUSE

THE LIFE OF ORESTES AUGUSTUS BROWNSON

by  
*Doran Whalen*

1941

SHEED & WARD  
NEW YORK

Copyright, 1941, by  
Sheed & Ward, Inc.

FIRST PRINTING, MARCH, 1941

IMPRIMATUR:

†JOHN FRANCIS NOLL  
Bishop of Fort Wayne

November 30, 1940

MANUFACTURED IN THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA  
BY THE HADDON CRAFTSMEN, INC., CAMDEN, N. J.

# Contents

INTRODUCTION	vii
BACKGROUND AND ENVIRONMENT	1
ORESTES WALKS OUT OF HIS CHILDHOOD	20
THE YOUNG MINISTER	35
THE WORKING MAN'S PARTY	44
THE INDEPENDENT MINISTER	74
THE SOCIETY OF CHRISTIAN UNION AND PROGRESS	96
THE BOSTON MOVEMENT	117
BROOK FARM	143
THE DEMOCRATIC LEADER	158
THE CONVERT	195
BROWNSON HIS BROTHER'S KEEPER	215
TO ELIZABETH, N. J., VIA NEW YORK	236
THE CONTROVERSIALIST	280
MEN OF OXFORD	305
THE OLD DOCTOR	327
MONUMENTA	363

## Acknowledgments

The author herewith makes grateful acknowledgments for invaluable aid from Paul Byrne and his assistant librarians at the University of Notre Dame for permitting consultation of unpublished letters; from Professor John T. Frederick and the late Fred I. Myers for guidance in research; from the Reverend William Bergin, C.S.V., and the Reverend Joseph P. Donovan, C.M., for anecdotes current among friends who had known Brownson; from Mrs. Thomas Odiorne, and Mary B. Tenney, R.S.C.J., granddaughters of Orestes, for letters, photographs, and scrapbooks; from Mrs. C. E. Dana, a grandniece, for certifying dates and relationships through her family *Bible*; from Mary O. Brownson, granddaughter, for correspondence and photographs; from the Reverend Michael J. Scanlon of Chelsea, Massachusetts, for correspondence on the Brownson traditions in that place.

## Introduction

*The New York Times* of July 7, 1937, carried a story about a local monument that had by accident regained identity in the city. RIVERSIDE STATUE STUMPS HISTORIANS, read the caption in the *Times*, with the subheading: "Bust of heavily bearded man, found on ground near pedestal, baffles police."

This figure had stood for years in Riverside Park at 104th Street, staring monotonously at an unmindful public. Few passers-by had paused to read the inscription; and to them, the name brought no recognition or even curiosity. But when police found the dignified man with his face in the mud, concern grew. The event drew a news-hawk who, awaiting opportunity to learn the name, smilingly prepared a title on his ever ready pad: So-and-So Humbled to the Earth. Then he read:

Brownson  
1803—1876  
Publicist, Philosopher, Patriot  
He Loved  
God, Country, and Truth

The analytic gaze of the journalist rested on the broad forehead of the carved face, on the thoughtful, penetrating eyes, the decisive mouth, and the flowing hair and beard. Moreover the reporter checked the fact that Brownson's garb was neither military nor clerical; he made sure that the spelling of the name was not Browning, and repaired to the ready reference books in his car.

Nothing there. In the library he learned the full name of his subject, and many other items of interest: *Brown-*

son's *Quarterly Review* had been a one-man magazine through a period of thirty years; it had gone out to readers in all levels of society, to youth and to profound minds throughout America and Europe. A century ago the man was figuring in the Boston Movement, and was soon to sign up in a chain of Lyceum lectures. Meanwhile, the editor criticized contemporary essayists and political leaders in much the incisive and pontifical manner of Jeffrey in the early *Edinburgh Review*. Brownson had helped to mold minds on questions of education, politics and religion. He had roused powerful enemies. He had died at the age of seventy-two, making scarcely a stir in circles literary or political. Dying had been the most quiet deed of the old battler. But though much of his power had ceased before his death, villains did feel the safer for his going.

Such is the man whom the author hopes to revivify in the chapters which follow. The sincerity of Brownson's soul and the depth of his philosophy should make him a world figure. Among the obstacles to this end is the almost complete change in atmosphere and aspirations of the twentieth century from the nineteenth. Brownson's was a pioneer age wherein the majority were strong, sincere men, wrenching a livelihood from the unwilling wilderness; where a greedy, ambitious minority experimented in political intrigue to make worthy purposes collide; but where most men were carefully informed and profoundly interested in the trends of national affairs. America was immersed in the dangerous experiment of forming a new democracy.

The duty of recalling Brownson is undertaken by one not too far removed from scenes of pioneer life in the West. This is an aid; for there, at a later period, circumstances followed a pattern somewhat like those of the pre-Civil-War East. Particularly has this been true in the matter of political and religious prejudices.

Meanwhile, the time is ripe for the re-awakening of the "old lion." Nearing mid-twentieth century there remain forest thickets harboring thieves and wicked men. The times would be the better for a great roar from over the editorial desk of Orestes A. Brownson.



## CHAPTER I

# The Background and Early Environment of Orestes Augustus Brownson

THE exact circumstance that turned the first Protestant Brownson from the Catholic faith seems lost to history; but it is a fair surmise that the cause was not fear of either foe or misfortune. Certainly Ailwin Brownson, who lived in County Stafford in the thirteenth century, was Catholic. Just as certainly, the Pilgrims of the seventeenth century, Richard, John, and Mary Brownson, were dissenters.

Tracing the Brownson groups by the spelling of their names brings evidence that the Brownsons of the Plymouth Colony came from the Derbyshire branch of Ailwin's family, rather than the Suffolk or the Scottish division. In certain individual preferences, each member differed from his brother; but in general they adhered to a notable characteristic of daring, stubborn, honest independence. Any of them could be terribly mistaken in his notions of a person, or of God; but he would not be insincere in his adherence to the idol of his choice or the God of his vision.

That first Protestant in the family must have been convinced that his act of changing affiliations was a matter of conscience; and the members who joined the tide of Puritan emigration to American shores did so because they could not endure having the thoughts inside their brains regulated by national law. Weak acquiescence is not a Brownson trait in any generation.

They are also a people physically strong, mentally alert, and spiritually generous. But earnestness and zeal breed disputes; and the American pioneer life added a directness of speech not always conducive to peace. When precept and practice in high circles of the Plymouth Colony stood at variance, disagreements grew rapidly. Men and women who had risked their lives to worship in peace among congenial neighbors found themselves still subject to encroachments on freedom. They were astonished. Almost immediately after the arrival of the Mayflower laws of a surprising nature were enacted. Neighbors, who in England had combined for effectual protest, stood against one another in America for like cause.

Among those who took exception to the colony's practice of seizing without payment land belonging to the Indians, were two ministers of the gospel, Thomas Hooker and Roger Williams. In the name of honesty, these men challenged also the custom of confiscating a man's home or a portion of his property because of his alleged liberalism. Furthermore, they pronounced certain gossip about bewitched milch cows, dogs, and stupid children, to be sheer nonsense.

Dissension led to the founding of two new colonies, Connecticut and Rhode Island, in 1636. The Brownsons were among those who determined to leave the homes they had designed in stately proportion and had built with their own hands for permanency. A second time they set out into the unknown for a dream-goal of freedom, and became active in the nucleus of the Hartford Colony.

John established his home with a cluster of neighbors who decided to call their village Farmington. He chose names for his three girls and four boys from the Old Testament: Mary, Dorcas, Sarah, Jacob, John, Isaac, and Abraham. Samuel, son of Isaac and Mary Root Brown-

son, married Ruth Smith of Kensington, and established their home in her town. Elijah, son of Samuel, married Abigail Winchel, and lived in Southbury.

This was the farthest reach south that the early Brownson family made. The first groups, having turned their backs upon Massachusetts, remained facing with the current of the Connecticut River. Each new home can be traced ten, fifteen, or even twenty miles farther south or west than the parent house. They scattered, but they did not lose touch with everything in the Plymouth Colony. The pulpit of Jonathan Edwards began especially to attract the attention of the Hartford group.

Some of the Connecticut colonists had friends and relatives in Northampton, Massachusetts, and they returned, from visits up north, with echoes of the Edwards sermons in their minds. The whole new colony grew to respect the Reverend Jonathan. Thus when, in 1750, the gray-haired missionary had won such disfavor in Massachusetts as to be solemnly dismissed, the sympathy of Hartford followed him in his work among the Indians.

Furthermore, the dissenting minister's *Treatise Concerning Religious Affection* passed from enthusiasts to the curious and was avidly read; but it did not cause the stir, and the argumentation in circles, that came from his *Freedom of the Will*. Edwards wrote that work with a full acceptance of predestination as a fact. The Browns were among those who talked it over through long perplexing hours; for religious questions were of vital concern to each adult member of the Brownson family. And devotion was implanted in the children. Each new branch maintained the custom of strict observance of morning prayers in common, and the daily reading of Scripture.

The specific occasion which brought Nodiah Brownson of Southbury, grandson of Samuel, back up Kensington way, on the first of an important series of visits, is not

clear. But Sybble Horsington, of New Britain, had something to do with many Sunday excursions that followed. Nodiah was twenty-five before he persuaded the timid though coquettish Sybble to become his bride. The third child of this New Britain family was Sylvester Augustus, born June 7, 1772. He was to become the father of Orestes Augustus.

Revolution was in the air. War with the mother country broke; and the colonies had become the United States of America before the rangy boy, Sylvester, arrived at his teens. He grew tall, and matched his strength in work, games, and wrestling, with the best in a wide circle of towns and villages. A slender and attractive fellow, he reached the height of six feet and four inches. He wore a wide smile and moved with a long stride.

In his early twenties, Sylvester Brownson took his adventurous spirit up through the old territory claimed by the present State of Massachusetts, and into New Hampshire. He had expected to return the next spring; but in the home of Jotham Metcalf, in Cheshire County, a beautiful daughter of the household helped him to make other plans. Sylvester had no fortune to offer the bride of his choice, and Relief's possessions were meagre. Both had a great faith in the Providence which had brought them together, and a great hope in the untouched West.

They married, and started immediately on a distant search for a perfect site to build their home. They loved the aloneness of the wilderness, and the perfect mountain scenery along the White River. They followed it to the new, growing village of Stockbridge, Vermont, at the foot of the Green Mountains. Stockbridge pleased them, and gave them welcome. They stayed.

Sylvester set to felling trees and preparing a spot for a large house such as his brothers had built down in Connecticut. There was no dearth of lumber. The restful,

pine-covered mountains were not alone beautiful. They did look like the back-drop and wings of a wooded set for the stage; but they held potential planks and rafters, porches, and roofs, and chairs.

With a new energy, Relief was too busy to find loneliness in the epic setting of young Vermont. There were spinning, weaving, and sewing to be done; while Sylvester measured, sawed, fitted, and nailed. The ease and pride with which her husband accomplished things gave her confidence in a sunlit future extending into far distant years. A new home, at the turn of a new century, in a new nation, of a new world! Children came. The second son, christened Daniel, might take his place beside the Old Testament Connecticut cousins. But one wonders what Aunts Ruth and Sarah might have remarked behind their Bibles, had they learned the names of the other children: Orrin, Thorina, and the twins, Orestes Augustus (he just missed Daphnis Augustus), and Daphne Augusta.

But aunts, in-laws, and cousins, were distant; and the Sylvester Brownsons were a self-sufficient universe. Then, at the age of thirty-three, the father of the home took a heavy cold, went into pneumonia, and died in less than a week. To the sheltered, dependent, playful Relief Metcalf, the house became suddenly very large, and very vacant.

Orrin was nine; Daniel, seven; Thorina, four, and the twins, two—five bewildered children under the age of ten to adjust to the fact of death. Relief could not believe that it had come to her home. With her crystal dreams shattered about her, Sylvester's widow stood silent, facing a reality which held compelling, personal responsibilities. Fortunately, there was no time for numbness in a house holding three little sons and two daughters.

Friendly neighbors came to do what they could. They took the children for brief intervals, brought food, served

guests, and sat through long hours of reminiscence, reviewing like circumstances. They were not in the way. The dazed widow leaned upon their sympathy and helpfulness. It was inadequate, but it was much.

The funeral over, friends scattered to the duties that called them; and they assumed the even tenor of their ways,—all but the Dean family. Their home was in Barnard, Vermont, about ten miles south of Stockbridge. No enlightening record of the previous connection with the Brownsons seems available. But they took the wide-eyed little Thorina with them. There is negative evidence that they adopted her outright; for through a long period, her name does not appear in letters; nor is it mentioned that any except Orestes returned to care for the mother fourteen years later when because of ill health she removed to Balston Spa, New York.

Certainly, one may assume that Mrs. Brownson would have recalled a daughter of eighteen at that time, had she felt free to do so. In one note from Orestes, written forty-two years later, however, and addressed to his wife then visiting in Balston Spa, he says, "I hope Mother is getting better. I am sure you find her a dear old lady, and Thorina is a dear good sister."

Mystery, too, surrounds the "elderly couple" from Royalton, fifteen miles in the opposite direction from Stockbridge. They came four years after the death of Sylvester, took Orestes to their home, and kept him for eight years. He makes kindly reference to them more than once in his writings; yet he gives them no names.

There was a great scene at the separation of the six-year-old twins. Daphne was of a dependent nature. Orestes was a doer and a giver. She never grew to a height beyond five feet, and was a very small child. At six, Orestes could lift his little sister the inches necessary to reach window sills and shelves in the pantry. Daphne had come to rely upon her brother for everything; and,

while he made little show of affection, he was her constant defense. Daphne felt that half of her physical self was boosted into the wagon after Mrs. Elderly Couple to be driven away between the two. The driver mounted last, loosened the lines from a peg in the front of the box, slapped them over the broad backs of his team, and the wagon moved stoically forward. Daphne squealed and wrapped herself in her mother's ample skirts. Looking back, through many sorrows, at the age of ninety, she declared that she had suffered nothing in all the years to compare with the first parting from her twin.

Orestes, trying desperately to be a man, ignored his tears dropping on the breast of his coat; but he turned his head as the wagon edged into the street, and saw Relief squatting down to the level of Daphne, and trying to comfort her. Staring straight ahead again, Orestes pushed his little hands deep into his pockets. Mr. Elderly Couple looked to his wife for a cue. She gave none. They rode in silent patience, on the plain board seat of the jogging wagon, over endless miles. Orestes slept. He remembered being dazed as he awoke at the end of the journey, but instinctively waiting at the side of the vehicle for the bundle of clothes that was his; then, he followed the wide little woman to the door of their small dwelling.

It was ever to seem more an impersonal abode than a home to him, despite the kindness and the opportunities offered him there. His cot had been arranged across the door of what he knew later was a "sitting room," leading from the kitchen-dining-room-living-room which they entered at dusk that evening. He was hungry. No bowl of bread and milk ever tasted better than that over which he bowed his tousled head for a very long grace on the evening of his first arrival.

Brownson refers to the house as a "shanty." It was not large; but it held all the appurtenances of a frugal life

for the body, and literature besides. From the low rafters hung branches of herbs and spices, ever offering welcome and a pungent promise of good things to eat. The living room had two small windows. It was furnished simply with a drop-leaf walnut table set in the middle of a rag rug, four plain chairs, an open cabinet holding blue delf, a single shelf of books, two rockers, and a fireplace. Besides the parlor entrance behind the bed of Orestes, there was another door which usually stood ajar. It led into a small bedroom. On one side of the hearth stood a conspicuous box of short pine logs, giving a fresh fragrance to the room. On the opposite side hung a neat array of brass and iron cooking-utensils. Two heavy candlesticks and two lighter ones rested on the marble mantle. These were lifted down for the evening meal in winter, and for the reading of Scripture before retiring.

The appearance of everything about the tidy house remained unchanged during the eight years of the boy's stay; but he came to appreciate the quiet sameness of both its arrangement and its regime. The kindly man and woman answered the questions that puzzled his mind, and they taught him prayer, self-reliance, and the use of books.

Every evening, for two years, the young prodigy read, within hearing of the man of the house, his morning's lesson. At such sessions, Orestes Augustus set his shoulders, and so pronounced his lines as daily to earn at least one grunt of approval from the silent, white-bearded figure sitting in the shadows with his chair tilted back against the wall.

The text from which Orestes learned to read was Jonathan Edwards. And, as though he inherited a love for the Northampton preacher, the boy yielded himself spell-bound to the book. First, he listened to the story; then he read it; and finally, with the animation of a revivalist, he recited the dreadful details about souls that led gay

lives and at death plunged straight into fires that kept burning and burning always.

The Puritan heritage in Orestes Brownson is not, in itself, a matter of general interest; but as a factor in making the man it was of such extreme importance that its omission in his biography would present a false picture of his life. Tears of sympathy welled into the hazel-gray eyes of the future minister as his sensitive imagination followed stories of the damned. He asked many questions. Gazing into the tense face of his earnest preceptor, he decided that life was a serious business, and that nothing in it was quite as important as avoiding the trapdoors that dumped persons out of life into Hell.

One day when Orestes was eight years of age he accompanied his adopted father to a neighboring town to hear a military band and see troops drilling for the War of 1812. At the edge of a large pasture-land, the boy and his guardian stood with the other spectators who were either too old or too young to fight. The elderly Puritan mingled with the maimed men who had fought in the Revolutionary War and who had hoped that they would never again see Americans prepare for battle. Their minds were perplexed; and they questioned the ruling Providence that would soon permit new wars to repeat the cruelties of old wars.

They had fought to free America from England; and their blood was up again. They were no pacifists. But they wanted their past sacrifices to count for something. They would like to feel that the issues for which they had battled were now settled, at whatever cost—that they were not to be renewed and re-contested by every second generation.

“If there be a God,” one of them had ventured, “He should show Himself powerful enough to maintain peace here in the new world where things had promised to be different.”

These frail old shadows of their former manhood stood as somber spirits behind the tragedies in new blood about to be shed. And the all-absorbing gaze of Orestes was fastened on the specters rather than on the elastic step of young recruits. The future philosopher took position with his back to the fascinating scene of soldiers marching. He was deaf to the beat and rhythm of the kettle drums, and absorbed in sympathy for desperate old Revolutionary heroes.

That night, as his foster mother placed food before her husband and the boy, she asked Orestes what he had liked best in his day abroad. He astonished her with the reply that he had "heard two men talking about God."

Thus early did Orestes Brownson meet the perplexity and conflict in the nineteenth-century American mind. The Protestant of that period was dead in earnest about religion. He was willing to do hard things in its name, and to renounce an enormous amount of pleasure to meet the requirements of formal religion. He was of a thoughtful temper; and, though ill-equipped in education, he puzzled over the deepest of sciences, theology, and attempted to settle its problems for himself.

That was according to his habit of action. In the eighteenth century Francis Hopkinson wrote of the American pioneers:

"They turn their heads to everything; their situation obliges them to do so. A farmer there cannot run to an artist upon every trifling occasion. He must make and mend and contrive for himself. This I observe in my travels through that country. In many towns and in every city they have public libraries. Not a tradesman but will find time to read. He acquires knowledge imperceptibly. He is amused with voyages and travels and becomes acquainted with the geography, customs and commerce of other

countries. He reads political disquisitions and learns the great outlines of his rights as a man and as a citizen. He dips a little into philosophy, and knows that the apparent motion of the sun is occasioned by the real motion of the earth. In a word he is sure that, notwithstanding the determination of the king, lords, and commons to the contrary, two and two can never make five."

But, despite this independence of judgment, each home-made philosopher was conscious to some degree that his training was inadequate. Thus he found himself in either doubt or fear through more than half of his time; for the fragments of truth in his possession never made a satisfactory whole. The age of indifference, into which the wearied era finally drifted, had not yet arrived. Men of the early and mid-nineteenth century believed in Hell as an actuality awaiting any unfortunate mis-step.

Woods-men and merchants sought some expounder of the gospel to fuse their varied handfuls of sand-grain truth into the Rock upon which Christ had built His Church and on which they longed to stand. Brownson, himself, as a minister of the Gospel, was to look about for an able leader, and many of his contemporaries were, thirty years hence, to pin their faith to his findings.

When that opportunity arrived, Brownson referred to the religious experiences of his childhood, as a proof against the materialistic trend of his times:

"My own experience must count for something for myself. Theology has been to me something more than mere speculation. It engrossed my infant mind. It is connected with all I remember of my early visions, and entwined with all the endearing associations of my childhood and youth. When reason first awoke, while thought was unfledged, it was to me a deep and cherished feeling.

In the early dawn of youth, there was nothing I so much dreaded as that which should divert my thoughts from the Deity, and interrupt my silent intercourse of soul with the Father of our spirits. I loved the night, for it seemed to shadow Him forth, and to give Him a local habitation. I frequented the deep solitude of the forest, I climb the ragged mountain, stood upon its huge cliffs; I gazed with rapture on nature in her wildest and most fitful moods; for in the lone, wild, grand, sublime scenery around me, I seemed to trace His work, and to feel His spirit reigning in silent, but not unacknowledged, majesty. I was never alone. I felt the Deity was with me. I loved His presence. A consciousness of it created my joy and waked my holier and better feelings. These were hallowed days! Their memory is deep graven in my heart. As I view them, mellowed by time and distance, it is with emotion I say to myself, 'They are gone.'"

Henry Brownson, Orestes' son, writing of this time says:

"Without companions of his own age, the child early learning to read, devoted his leisure time to earnest study of books within his reach, and which gave a permanent direction to his mind. From the old folk with whom he lived, he acquired a permanent love of truth; and from the scenery about him, a love of nature's beauties, and a patriotic attachment for his boyhood's home; from the *Bible* and *The History of the Redemption*, a love of religion as a point of chief importance in life. These were ever after the three most distinguishing marks of his personality."

Orestes grew rapidly; yet he remained a healthy, active, well-made, and unusually strong boy who made himself useful in chopping and carrying wood. He amused himself by racing the rabbits and squirrels in the forest; he

climbed trees, and jumped, again and again, from their limbs as from a spring-board.

Meanwhile, besides the religious books in his home, Orestes found access to classics from the libraries of neighbors. These cultured persons marveled at the young Brownson prodigy's habit of asking questions beyond his years, and of trudging off joyously, at the age of ten or twelve, with a heavy volume under his arm. Happiness filled his days while, with head bent over the books, his clear mental vision followed from page to page through undisturbed meditation.

By his twelfth year, he was known to everyone in Roy-alton. Word had gone abroad, doubtless from the preacher's wife to her sewing circle, that a genius was amongst them. Lending him books became from thenceforward an honor to one's self, and a means of displaying taste in the family tradition.

Thus, when one person announced having loaned "Orestes, that strange young giant," a set of books called *English Classics of Queen Anne's Reign*, the example was followed. Another source offered fifty volumes of *English Poets*. At thirteen Orestes was reading Locke's *Essay Concerning Human Understanding*. Pope's *Translation of Homer* formed the nucleus of his next year's study.

Many of the marvels that he found in the classics could be talked over only with his mother, the romantic Relief Brownson. Between visits home, Orestes stored in his mind all the events and personalities that he found hidden away in borrowed volumes. His mother enjoyed the stories for their own sake and for the value added by her son's narration of them. Failures and triumphs were alike wonderful to him, provided the personages in the experience were equally daring.

And besides meeting fictional characters, Orestes reveled in histories of countries like his own. He read of new governments growing wide and great,—growing cruel

too; and then crumbling to nothing under the hammer of a strong neighbor nation. He read various monographs of American history; and he seized on *Robinson Crusoe*, *Philip Quarles*, and the *Arabian Nights* with utter joy. "I devoured them all," he wrote later, "but none with more interest than the *Bible*." He met the whole world, he told his mother, in one little room. And over and over again, he met God in the Gospel narrative and in the woods. We have his own statement in *The Convert*:

"I have had my joys and sorrows, but I have never known or imagined on earth greater enjoyment than I had as a boy lying on the hearth in a miserable shanty reading by the light of burning pine-knots some book I had just borrowed. I felt neither hunger nor thirst, and no want of sleep. My book was meat and drink, home and raiment, friend and guardian, father and mother.

"There were in those days few children's books, and none of them came in my way, for which I have been thankful. Old people may read children's books and find recreation in them but they are unprofitable reading for children. It is a damage for children to have thought made easy for them. The earlier their intellects are taxed, and the harder they are obliged to struggle to find some meaning in what they read, the better it is for them. Their minds grow clear by exercise, and grow strong; but children's books feed their young minds on pap and panando, and keep their mental digestion always weak and incapable of relishing, even in after life, strong, healthy, and invigorating food. Hence, in our day, we are obliged to dilute literature for grownup men and women, and so write novels or romance, as to take care that we do not overload them with thought. We no longer train our children to be men, thinking men, or as Emerson says, men thinking. We do their

thinking for them, what little thinking there is, and keep them children in understanding all their lifetime. I think it is a great advantage to me that I read books beyond my age, and could think, reason, reflect, before I had a beard on my upper lip."

Brownson's childhood, then, was far from normal. Before he had reached his teens, he was an old man with a set of Calvinistic principles and a wide knowledge of the Bible. He was obedient to his parents, respected his elders, and longed to know the least desire of God concerning him. He had a searching hunger for exact dogma. No one among his friends could help him at the age of thirteen; but he listened quietly to older persons in conversation about religious matters and carried the problems, unfinished, into some lonely spot to figure them out for himself.

Finally, he became fearful that the devil would come some day and carry him off. It was in this state of mind that he went one evening to talk over his troubles with an elderly woman who was very poor and who lived in a log hut in one corner of a farm near his home. She attended the Congregationalist church, and Brownson considered her a member of that sect. There seems reason for belief that she had once belonged to the Catholic Church. Her counsel was this:

"The Christian religion is not new, and Christians have existed since the reign of Christ. These new lights are of yesterday. . . . When you join any body calling itself a Christian body, find out and join that one that began with Christ and the Apostles, and has continued to subsist the same, without change of doctrine or worship, down to our own times. You will find the true religion in that body and nowhere else. Join it, obey it, and you will find rest and salvation."

This quieted the boy's mind, and he gave his thoughts

to other matters. The early citizens of Royalton, as elsewhere in the state of Vermont, talked long and earnestly on problems of government, politics, and economics. To understand the assumption of these men that state problems were their personal responsibility, one must view them in the perspective of history; besides the sturdy spirit of the pioneer, one must realize something of the tradition of exceptional independence in early Vermont. Pioneers of Vermont had, by personal initiative, kept the land as a state and had won for it, besides the spread of such culture as they brought into it, a double independence.

Both England and the colonies to the east and west of this wedge-shaped territory had, in its initial years, challenged its individual existence. They had attempted to absorb it amongst themselves. England had wished to annex it to Canada; and New Hampshire had issued altogether 131 township allotments from the Vermont territory. The ownership of these grants had been recognized as individual proprietorships outside the colonial state of New Hampshire. New York, in 1764, had claimed thereafter a royal order to issue grants in the disputed territory. Vermont had looked to be at the mercy of its neighbors but that was not true. Its citizens organized and fought for its rights. A meeting was called at the Kent home with Chittendens and Allens present.

The settlers associated themselves together to devise means of resisting the wrongs which were attempted against them. As the governor of New York had appealed to the British government, Carpenter and Arthur's *History of Vermont* tells us: "the Green Mountain boys . . . determined . . . to be heard there also . . . Ethan Allen entered vigorously into the contest with New York as a pamphleteer."

The Vermont pioneers had followed doubt and fear to triumph many times. They needed only conviction that

they were right. With truth on their side they "associated themselves together to devise a means of resisting" oppression. They would dare anything. The unlettered Allen prepared a document that arrested the attention and favor of King George III. Just law, and rightful authority within the limits of its power, had the respect and recognition of the early settlers. Beyond the jurisdiction of such law, matters of ownership and other things would be disputed in man-to-man contest. The press would be enlisted as a power in the attempt to form public opinion.

Vermont continued to consider itself as a distinct little nation—not one of the thirteen colonies. It was not until twelve years before the birth of Orestes Brownson that the independent unit applied to become one of the United States; and belief in its rights as an entity continued after its admission to the nation. Its remembrance of the old injustices that it had suffered at the hands of neighbors was strong. When, in the War of 1812, the 3rd division of Vermont militia was ordered to New York for defense, the Chittenden governor countermanded the national military order and thought that he was within his rights.

The independent spirit of their state was born within its citizens. Young Brownson was fascinated by the questions of rights and duties as discussed by men who seemed to know where the one ceased and the other began. Many were discontented with their lot. At forty, they were bent and broken under work beyond their strength; and, at fifty, they would die of old age.

It looked as though the time was ripe for someone again to do something of a practical nature for Vermont. The boy performed his chores about the place with more noise than usual. He burned with indignation at the cause of such conditions among its poor; and yet he could not see wherein the rich in the neighborhood were cruel. Orestes knew them and their families as well as he knew the

hard-handed men who were cursing their fate. The gracious ladies who strolled in their gardens each evening choosing blooms for vases of gold and silver, had paused in their gentle occupation to greet him. They had talked simply with the neatly attired lad of the book he was returning; they had accompanied him into their spacious homes, rich in lace and velvets, had helped him choose another volume from within mahogany book cases that lined the walls.

Even the barns of such places were elegant; but the owners were certainly unconscious of depriving the poor in order to possess such things. It all resulted from some blind system. Finding the head and heart of that machine, and changing it, would be a worthy task for a great man. He was six feet tall, and would be a man soon, his mother had said.

Orestes liked both classes concerned in the economic struggle that occupied his mind; he found both human, and on the whole well-meaning. He had already concluded that there existed among the poor an unselfishness, a strict sense of honor, a strength, and a spirit of heroism which he had not observed among the wealthy and more prosperous; but he could not concede that they were oppressed by the wealthy deliberately, with full knowledge and understanding or from cold malice or greed.

Acting on this conviction, Orestes introduced the subject one day to a man whose horses shone like silk. The conversation had started in a different direction; but it took a turn, and ended on the topic of equality of persons and opportunities. As the rich neighbor bade the boy goodnight, he ventured the opinion: "You'll be a great man, some day, Orestes. Perhaps you can find a way, sometime, to even things up for everybody." Young Brownson thanked him; and his stride, as he walked home was even longer and more buoyant than usual.

Meanwhile, boys native to Royalton grew weary of

hearing the name of Orestes dinned into their unwilling ears by fathers who considered the tall Brownson lad "quite remarkable," and by mothers who insisted that the study of books made a great difference in boys growing up. The lads of the town knew jumping, wrestling, and boxing very well; and behind a barn, one day, they decided to invite the neat and slender reed to an open competition in their line of attainment. There was much secret laughter as they elected their emissary and awaited the result of their challenge.

Orestes met the invitation as a boon. The lonely lad had no slight suspicion that the friendly gesture was intended to display him as a physical weakling. He knew that he was nothing of the kind. He, therefore, accepted their challenge at face value; and won, on his first entrance, at hurling, the long and the high jump and the race. With a little practice, his quick mentality coupled with a certain dexterity of hand made him master of wrestling as well. But he remained an outsider. The boys begrudged the bookworm physical as well as mental victory. Perhaps he won too regularly; at any rate, all dares were suddenly withdrawn, and all challenges evaded.

The wiry Orestes was in the fist-swinging gang for a brief space; but he was never of it. And although he kept himself occupied, and was not apparently worried over being a neighbor unwanted by those of his own age, he retained the fact in memory; and, at the age of seventy-three, related the circumstances to his son. He walked to Stockbridge one day to surprise his mother. Such journeys became more frequent as Mrs. Brownson's health began to break; and she came to rely more and more upon the brightness that entered the home with the occasional visits of Orestes. Because of leaving him, she hesitated to follow counsel and move to the healthful climate of Balston Spa, New York. Orestes begged her to go, and promised to follow her.

## CHAPTER II

### Orestes Walks Out of His Childhood

THUS it was that Orestes Augustus Brownson, a tall lean lad of fourteen, started out alone on a crisp Autumn day to walk from Royalton, Vermont, into New York State. He was leaving the protection of childhood behind him, and going out to meet, bare-handed, the realities of life. Ballston Spa was already a bustling health resort reflecting to some extent the excitement and activity of Lake George society.

But Orestes knew nothing of that. He was drawn to his mother's new home by a strong filial affection. To reach her, he was to do a journey over Indian trails, and crude, rather indefinite, wagon roads, leading to the more shallow fords, over and between the low wooded peaks of the Green Mountains and through fertile valleys. The undertaking was difficult, Orestes knew; and it was not without a sense of adventure that he was to step beyond the limits of his former vision.

He sought out the homes of friends, and returned the last of his borrowed books. He was a little tense, though, in saying good-bye. He found himself struggling between buoyant hope and regret as he realized that he was going away from kindly, interested souls with tears in their eyes as they wished him good fortune. The large and varied world, of which he had read, would be a stranger.

For the first time in his life he felt bashful and blundering, though he was totally unconscious of the stir that buzzed through the village behind him. Royalton was sad. The knowledge of his departure reached all circles. Ques-

tions that had long lain dormant found articulation. Who was Orestes Brownson anyway? Where had he come from—this prodigy that lay on his stomach before a fireplace through half the night, and who read books that most men of twenty could not understand, and that no woman of any age could grasp?

Benefactors felt a little resentment at his going. They had been interested to know what sort of man he would make; they were bent upon watching him grow up and were being robbed of a right. The curious were to lose sequence in the only continued story that had ever come into their little town. Some of them felt confident they would hear of Orestes again. The gang muttered “good riddance”; but both plain men and the aristocrats of the place pronounced him of a different blood from any in those parts. “Why, he reasoned like a member of Parliament in London.”

Meanwhile, the boy was on his way toward Stockbridge where he would remain over night. His quick step kicked a little stone before him as he walked; he found himself wondering whether he and it would prefer their changed locations. He knew the village of Royalton so well that, blindfolded, he could walk to any home in it. He could name the books on the single pine shelves afforded by small homes, and in the polished cases in pillared houses set behind formal gardens. He knew nothing of Balston Spa.

But he would grow to manhood there. He would look for the Church that Christ founded. He would study to discover the way in business “to even things up for everybody” in America. He had set for himself a life-aim devoted to God and to his neighbor. And now it seemed to him that he was upon the road to its achievement.

In a larger town, he hoped to find a school, many books, and teachers who would know the meaning of every page. Some preacher would settle his religious perplexities, he

hoped; and the school would enable him to write the two messages that burned for utterance. He would address one message to the poor, and one to the rich; and both books would point out the evils that lie at the heart of business. Orestes saw no obstacle to the planting of his Utopia. He saw nothing exaggerated in his day-dream of hundreds of poor lads squaring their shoulders in hope and pride at learning the high possibilities within themselves. Like magic, his imagination saw purposeful boys growing up to be honest citizens, as physically and mentally alert as himself, knowing beautiful things, worshiping God, and doing right. They would love their nation and make the whole world love it. The best from other lands would be drawn to it and would find it to be more than they had hoped.

He went rapidly, almost impatiently, about his tasks. He reviewed the advantage of getting his messages into books; for what one heard might be brushed aside and forgotten. But the printed expression would be accepted as truth. He had handled volumes with reverence since his first experience of them; and he believed that everyone would accept books as sacred things.

First, he must learn many things. There would be duties in his home; but he would never lose sight of the major purposes of his life. With such thoughts, Orestes followed the road that he knew well, from Royalton to Stockbridge. The wind played eagerly with the lad's great shock of wavy brown hair, and left it in somewhat the same tangled mass as were the crowded thoughts in his active mind. Time would smooth the hair back from his high forehead. Deep study through years would disentangle many of the perplexities of his mind.

He spent the night in a neighbor's home and rose early, hoping to reach Rutland, twenty-one miles beyond Stockbridge, before dark the second night. He was fortunate. A farmer, driving a load of grain and tallow to market,

and seeing on his road a pedestrian fully six feet in height, thought him to be a man. Offering a lift, he was surprised to find a child's face raised to thank him for his invitation. It was only a boy who tossed a home-spun blanket into the wagon, leaped to the top of the wheel, and settled himself beside the driver with evident joy at being alive. But it was a man who promptly unfolded to his benefactor the sober plans and purposes that led him westward.

Orestes immediately inquired of the stranger whether he knew which church Jesus Christ had founded while on earth. Could his benefactor tell exactly what Christ wished his followers to do? His new friend ventured that one church was about as good as another,—all but the erring Catholic Church. Whereupon young Brownson displayed a compass that he was carrying. Life was a journey, quite like the one that he was taking toward an unknown place. What he sought was something like that compass—something, in a spiritual way, that could make a person sure he was going in the right direction.

The driver agreed. He had read some of Jonathan Edwards. He was more fearful about Hell than anxious about Heaven, but he admitted that it was all the same problem. Missing the one was bound to be finding the other. More than by the problem proposed, he was intrigued by this boy who held in his mind, like a fairy tale, all that he had ever heard about the unseen world.

As the travelers reached the crest of the mountain, the view struck Orestes to silence. He could see distances. He looked down on a wide sweep of grandeur that was entirely new. In the great valley to the west were long irregular lakes, and little threads of streams losing themselves in clumps of woods or behind more hills or mountains. White spikes from marble quarries stood out from the haze and the green like distant church steeples.

Orestes looked on it all with his eyes, his mind, and his

soul. Freedom could live here, if anywhere! This land offered possibilities which only centuries could develop. It was perfect. The winding path turned into a forest. God had made it all with such infinite care: each slender blade of vital green at the roadside; each brilliant autumn leaf on the maples, the oaks, and the sumac; each throbbing song in the woods; and again, as they came into an open space, the grandeur of that distant landscape!

Orestes wanted to be alone with it. He dismounted before he reached Rutland, and finished that section of the journey in the morning. In utter silence save for the murmured ripple of distant running water and the sound of the night wind in the trees about him, he spent the long twilight and the night in the open. Too many things had happened lately; he had met too many strangers with differing ideas, and with varying degrees of indifference toward the Deity. He felt the need of communing, undisturbed, with the Maker of men and things, the Judge of persons and events.

It seemed to Orestes that the God Who had left the busy market-places to thieves and murderers, had hidden Himself in the quiet vastness of this wooded sanctuary. With peace about him, and in his soul, he slept, while night gathered and reigned in the valley.

Into the city the next morning and out of it again, he was offered no ride. He met a few farmers coming in to sell their wares. They would make a day of it, and would not start back to their homes until near nightfall. It might be, the boy conjectured, that the twenty-four miles to Whitehall would require a day and a fraction; but he had made good time, and could afford delay. He would not mind traveling alone, nor would he consider another night in the open a hardship. He would keep moving in the general direction of west and south. He crossed shallow fords in the streams by picking his steps from one protruding rock to another; or, by balancing his tall, erect

figure, he walked on the fallen trunk of a tree from bank to bank.

Making his way in the direction of Whitehall, and beyond it to Balston Spa, the young philosopher continued to search his mind, attempted to formulate a creed, and prayed earnestly in a manner not unlike the prescription of words used through the centuries in the old Apostolic Church: "O God, the protector of all who hope in Thee, without whom nothing is strong, nothing is holy, enlighten us, rule us, guide us, that we may so pass through temporal goods as to merit those that are eternal."

When he recognized Balston in the distance, his step quickened. At the edge of the town, he asked direction to his new home. The joy of surprise added to his welcome there, although the house was too small to afford him a bed. Orestes had much to tell and much to hear; but the best news was the item that his happy mother kept until last: James Comstock, a printer in the town, would accept him as an apprentice, allowing him to attend the Academy for the subjects of Latin and Greek, and to sleep on a counter in the shop.

Comstock liked him immediately, and retained him in his employ for the five years that Orestes remained in the town. The Browns had a few sheep that supplied enough wool to clothe the family. There survives a tradition, among the descendants of Daniel, that Orestes was too fastidious to care for the animals, to shear them, or to carry the oily fleeces to be cleaned and carded. Whatever the cause behind the division of work within the family, the fact remains that the printer's apprentice gave his whole day to his duty at the shop and the Academy.

Although he learned nothing of the conventionalities of life, Orestes did well in class and was normally popular. Boys of the neighborhood wished him to share their pastimes; but he continued his absorption in reading. Between duty and pleasure, he read everything in Balston;

but he returned, again and again, to the Bible. Then before Orestes was sixteen his aunt, Relief's sister, came on from New Hampshire to visit the family. She too enjoyed reading, but not Bible study. She had been dipping into the contradictory teachings of Atheism and Universalism. She had with her Hosea Ballou's *Treatise on the Atonement* which she shared with Orestes. Though the boy was tall and seemed mature, he was too young to wrestle with the problems that followed.

He buried himself in that book for days, and returned to it again. After he finished Dr. Winchester's *Dialogues* and *Lectures on the Prophecies*, he became reticent. The talkative boy was silent. He had no confidence to give. Then he got in with some godless fellows from the printing shop, and gave less time to books. Relief tried to interest him again in conversation about God and the Bible; but he walked away. Mrs. Brownson and her sister quarreled; but it was too late to undo the mischief. Orestes was not attending church services and seemed more a stranger to his mother every time they met. Relief experienced again the old lonely helplessness that had come to her at the sudden death of Sylvester. Brownson relates the struggle in *The Convert*:

"After I was fourteen years of age, I was thrown upon a new world, into the midst of new and strange scenes, and exposed to new and corrupt influences. I fell in with new sectaries, universalists, deists, atheists, and nothingarians, as they are called within us, who profess no particular religion. I still held fast to my belief in the need of religion, and there were times when my earlier feelings revived, and I enjoyed my silent meditations. But my young head became confused with the contradictory opinions I heard advanced, with the doubts and denials to which I listened; and for a time my mind was

darkened, and I half persuaded myself that all religion was a delusion—the work of priestcraft or statecraft. I was in a labyrinth of doubt, with no Ariadne's thread to guide me out to the light of day. I was miserable, and knew not where to turn for relief. I felt that my own reason was insufficient to guide me; and the more I attempted by it alone to arrive at truth, the further I went astray, and the more uncertain and perplexed I became."

Orestes endured this struggle for five years: resolving, breaking resolutions, rebelling against laws that seemed impossible for human nature to observe, laws that no one seemed to keep. They were not considered practical by regular attendants at church services. His extraordinary physical strength was rather a hindrance than an aid in the spiritual combat; and his clear mentality only gathered to itself more and more contradictory evidences. And then there came waves of blinding darkness when he felt the utter futility of fighting for the imagined standards of a possibly imagined God. Again to continue from *The Convert*:

"One day, when I was about nineteen years of age, I was passing a Presbyterian meeting-house. It was Sunday, and the people were gathering for the service. The thought struck me that I would go in and join with them. It was a beautiful September day in Malta, Saratoga County, New York. The air was soft and balmy, the sky was clear and serene, and it seemed as if all nature were enjoying the sweet Sabbath-day repose. I went into the meeting-house; it was long since I had been in a place of worship. The singing was, perhaps, not very good, but it soothed me, while it affected me even to tears. I listened reverently to the reading of the Scriptures, to the prayer, and to the sermon. There was nothing

in the sermon that I remember. It was a commonplace affair. But I went out from that meeting-house much affected, and feeling that I had missed my way. As I pursued my journey, I could not help asking myself what I had gained by my speculations, and why it was that I must have no sympathy with my kind; why I must stand alone, and find no belief to sustain me, and have no worship to refresh me.

"I have, said I, in my self-communing, done my best to find the truth, to experience religion, to lead a religious life; yet here I am, without faith, without hope, without love. I know not what to believe. I know not what to do. I know not whence I came, why I am here, or whither I go. My life is a stream that flows out of darkness into darkness. The world is dark to me, and not a ray of light, even for one instant, relieves it. My heart is sad, and I see nothing to hope for, or to live for. . . . Why is this so? Why does my heart rebel against the speculations of my mind? If doubt is all there is for me, why cannot I discipline my feelings into submission to it? Why this craving to believe when there is nothing to be believed? Why this longing for sympathy when there is nothing to respond to my heart? Why this thirst for an unbounded good, when there is no good, when all is a mere show, an illusion, and nothing is real? Have I not mistaken my way? . . .

"They told me to submit my reason to revelation. I will do so. I am incapable of directing myself. I must have a guide. I will hear the church. I will surrender, abnegate my own reason which hitherto has only led me astray, and make myself a member of the church, and do what she commands me.

"In a few days I told my experience to the Presbyterian minister of the town where I was pursuing my academic studies, went the same day, at his request,

and told it to the Session of his church, and the Sunday following was baptized and received into the Presbyterian communion. I did not ask whether the Presbyterian Church was the true church or not, . . . I was satisfied. So in October 1822, I became a member of the Presbyterian Church, Balston, Saratoga County, New York . . .

"I tried for a year or two to stifle my discontent, to silence my reason, to repress my natural emotions, to extinguish my natural affection and to submit patiently to the Calvinistic discipline. I spent much time in prayer and meditation, I read pious books, and finally plunged myself into my studies with a view of becoming a Presbyterian minister. But it would not do. I had joined the church because I had despised of myself, and because, despairing of reason, I wished to submit to authority. If the Presbyterian Church had satisfied me that she had authority, was authorized by Almighty God to teach and direct me, I could have continued to submit; but while she exercised the most rigid authority over me, she disclaimed all authority to teach me, and remitted me to the Scriptures and private judgment. . . .

"This I regarded as unfair treatment. It submitted me to all the disadvantages of authority without any of its advantages. . . . My position was a painful one, and I could not endure it. I had despised of finding the truth by my own reason, and had, now, nothing better, nor so good, because I could not exercise it freely. I had gained nothing, but lost much, by joining the Presbyterian Church. Certainly I had been too hasty. . . . After all, what reason had I to regard this Presbyterian Church as the true church of Christ? 'Go not after the New Lights' said my old Congregationalist friend. . . . If our Lord founded a church and has a church on earth, it must

reach back to His time, and come down in unbroken succession from the Apostles.

"I was answered that the Church of Christ had become corrupt, and had been for a long series of ages perverted to a papistical and prelatrical church; and these men were reformers, and simply labored to restore the church to its primitive purity and simplicity. But had they a warrant from Christ to do that? Or did they act on their own responsibility, without warrant? If you say the former, where is the proof? If the latter, how can their acts bind me?

"It was clear to me that the Presbyterian Church, though the church of one class of reformers, was not and could not be the church of Christ, and therefore it could have no legitimate authority over me. If Christ had a Church on earth which He had founded, and which had authority to teach in His name, it was evidently the Roman Catholic Church. But that Church, of course, was out of the question. It was every thing that was vile, base, odious and demoralizing. It had been condemned by the judgment of mankind, and the thought of becoming a Roman Catholic found and could find at that time no entrance into my mind. . . . What, then, was I to do? There was no alternative. It was the Catholic Church or no church. All the so-called Protestant churches were 'New Lights', were of yesterday, founded by fallible men, without warrant from God, without authority but their private interpretation of Scripture. . . . The important thing with me, from the first, was, to find out the rule of faith.

"God gave me reason, I said in my self-communion. It is my distinguishing faculty, and to abnegate it is to surrender my essential character as a man, and to sink myself, theoretically, to the level of the brute creation. Revelation, if revelation there be, must be

made to me as a man, as a rational subject. Take away my reason, and you may as well make a revelation to an ox or a horse, a pig or an ass, as to me. It demands reason to receive revelation, and the natural to receive the supernatural.

"I must then, I continued, revoke the act of surrender which I made of my reason to authority on entering the Presbyterian Church; for it was an irrational, and unmanly act. . . . It was really a blind submission, and no submission of my reason at all. It was a cowardly act, the act of an intellectual desperado, although the motive was good. I reclaim my reason, I reclaim my manhood, and henceforth I will, let come what may, be true to my reason, and preserve the rights and dignity of my human nature."

But, in nineteenth-century America, in pioneer America, membership in a religious denomination was important. Matters of the mind and of the soul were looked upon, not as a man's personal affair, but as the business of the social unit in which he lived. At that time, intelligence and faith rather than business and property distinguished a man. Membership in a denomination was important to one's neighbors. The young man who severed connection with a sect, after he had "joined the church," was an offender against respectable, law-abiding citizens. In such a way did a libertine exhibit his independence of God, conscience, and virtue. In such a way did a freethinker rouse the ire of loyal believers.

An economic fact aided ethics in this. Unity was of prime importance in the matter of group protection and national defense. Frontiersmen knew its value; and, although they were strong individualists, they were always a unit on certain questions. Love of country was one requirement demanded from all; and, in New England, the respectable citizens all attended church. The church

was a necessary element in maintaining a center of interest; it was a social force within a settlement. Thus, shifted religious views were looked upon as a disintegrating influence.

As Relief Brownson's inertia at the death of her husband was broken by the needs of her children, so now her sensitiveness was shaken to activity by the gossip that Orestes had declared disbelief in Hell. Mrs. Brownson talked to her estranged son. The boy would not deliberately wound his mother. He listened. Things were awkward between them for a few moments. Then he assured her that he continued to hold his earlier strict code of honesty and truth, but that not everything was as easy as that.

In answer to Relief's insistent question about his belief in perdition as a fact, Orestes remained silent after he despaired of evading the issue. Then he suddenly blurted out that if the fire of Hell could be extinguished by the pronouncement of a convention, it was not the eternal, raging blaze that he had previously believed. This led to the story of his interview with Reuben Smith, the Presbyterian pastor of Balston Spa. The convert had found Smith confused and impatient at his following up of contradictory notions, and at his demanding of a positive pronouncement of the church's position upon them. Each response had occasioned further questions, and Orestes had worn the minister out. Finally, the Reverend Mr. Smith, after a discussion concerning predestination and Hell, had promised to have the doctrines modified or rescinded altogether in the next assembly.

Orestes considered that expedient a plain dodging of the issue. He would like to go West, if his mother would permit. He believed that if he could get into the wilderness again, and think things through, he could recapture faith. Relief promised to follow his hope with her prayer. We next hear of him in Detroit, Michigan.

Thus it was that in January, 1824, before the Presbyterian assembly convened and extinguished Hell, Brownson had left the state of New York. But Smith did not forget him. That gentleman wrote of him in a letter dated February, 1858. His letter appeared in *The Presbyterian* of the month following:

"In 1822 he (Brownson) came, was examined, and was received. He communed with us once; went to the West to teach school, I think; and came back a Universalist; then he entered upon that downward course of changes which have marked his history since."

Brownson did teach in a village called Springwells, in Michigan, about eleven miles south of Detroit, on the River Rouge; and he did return a Universalist. In Michigan he found many currents of religious and political faith. There was even a Catholic church, the old parish of St. Ann, in Detroit. But at first none of the creeds affected his views deeply.

If he was awaiting leisure, it was afforded him by illness. There was malaria in the neighborhood of the River Rouge, a slow-flowing, sluggish stream. Before the end of the year, this wiry muscular young man, with his broad shoulders, and his spirit of conquest, had gone down before the disease like a weakling. He remained an invalid, confined to his bed with chills and fever, until the following Autumn.

Propped up in bed, he read and meditated. Being alone was not now the solace it had been six years previously. It meant remorse, rebellion and torment to his active mind. He studied books that carried contradiction; and the more he turned the items over in his mind, the less faith remained. When Brownson emerged from it all, he still granted that there is an over-ruling power upon whom man is dependent; but the Presbyterians were wrong and the Puritans were wrong. The Universalists taught that every soul is saved. That doctrine appealed to a young

man who had been through tortures of conscience and who had recently shivered not alone with the chills of malaria, but with the fear of death as well.

Thus Orestes was absorbed in everything the Universalists published; and startled to standing upright on reading their announcement that the sect would convene in general assembly in Hartland, Vermont in the fall of the year. He had six weeks in which to regain enough strength to travel, and go he must; for he could not live in the Detroit climate. It was a beautiful place. He liked many things about it, but it had shaken his bones nearly apart.

Hartland was a place to go, and the convention gave purpose to his goal. Orestes wrote the president of the assembly, applying for a fellowship as a preacher and stating frankly his age and limitations; but he included, also, his hopes and ambitions. The fellowship was awarded him immediately. By the time the delayed mails delivered it to him, he had again learned to balance his six-foot-two in an upright position and to walk with ease if not with vigor. When he purchased his ticket for Hartland he was twenty-one.

### CHAPTER III

## The Young Minister

As BROWNSON packed his few belongings to leave Detroit, he concluded that the malaria had been not totally unkind. He would carry with him the peace its leisure had permitted to grow within him, as well as some of the pains it had left in his bones. Doctors told him he need not expect perfect health again for perhaps seven years.

Arrived in New Hampshire, the new candidate for the ministry was appointed to immediate duty. Before his solemn ordination he was to try out his powers in the County of Windsor in Vermont. It was his old home county; and he returned to Stockbridge and Royalton. In the eight years of his absence some of his neighbors had died, some had moved away; but many remained who remembered him, and shook his hand warmly. They were proud of the slender cleric that they called their own.

Royalton wished to keep the itinerant minister; but he had engaged to visit the counties adjoining theirs: Windham and Rutland. By spring the novice had proven his worth as a preacher. On June 15, 1826, he was solemnly ordained in Jaffrey, New Hampshire. His certificate bears the signatures of Edward Turner and Charles Hudson.

Then, the "backslider" turned his gaze toward Balston Spa again. Certain sisters of the faith were denied, for a time, one subject of sober and devout lament; for even they were blinded by his reverence and ministerial appearance. There was no inconsistency of fact between a denial of the existence of Hell and an affirmation of the salvation of all. But the two were different doctrines. One

seemed a negation of the power of God; and the other declared that His mercy cancelled His justice. The eyes of the good sisters held only admiration. But not so, Reuben Smith of the Presbyterian pulpit; he growled his unchanged disappointment.

For days before the arrival of her duly invested son Mrs. Sylvester Brownson had been atremble with joy. Her indulgence saw Sylvester in the long stride and all-enveloping benevolence of Orestes. The youth had grown up in the two years that he was away, had adopted the vogue of sideburns, wore a long coat, a high vest, and a boiled shirt with a high collar. He brushed his great shock of brown hair straight back from his forehead. He was smiling, friendly, genial with everybody; and his very simplicity made for dignity in his bearing.

Almost immediately, the Reverend O. A. Brownson began his duties as circuit preacher in the state of New York. His first official post was in Whitehall, just inside the border from Vermont; his second, in Litchfield, farther west; and then in Geneva, at Seneca Lake. As his strength revived, Sunday duty alone was insufficient to occupy his energy. Without fee, he gathered the children of his flock into the hall used for Sunday services, and during the week gave them the rudiments of reading and writing.

When he reached Elbridge, New York, a one-room schoolhouse awaited his arrival; and a board of school directors sought a worthy applicant for the office of teacher. Brownson accepted. The salary of a preacher was small, and so was that of a teacher; but the two together made a respectable sum for that time.

Mr. Brownson held no papers of accreditation and no license to teach; but he was an efficient teacher, and directed his students what to read as well as how to read. He was a dynamo of energy. Debating and wrestling were included in his curriculum, as well as the basic foundation for syllogistic reasoning.

The Elbridge tutor watched no clock. He exercised the neighborly, sharing instinct of the usual pioneer, and willingly gave all that the interested students were capable of taking. The size and temperament of the man kept elements of distraction outside the door. He himself discovered new beauties in Scripture and in the classics while explaining them to his pupils. The children liked him. He was kind. He was interested in the things that were theirs. He asked questions before they did. Better than that, he carried in his head the answers to everything they had ever wanted to know.

Custom in the pioneer days required no board to be paid by the schoolmaster. He was regarded as a public servant to the citizens of a district; and they invited him to "stay about in turns" at the various homes of his pupils. Brownson had no dearth of invitations. He accommodated himself to the simple worker as well as to the more intellectual parents of the neighborhood.

Among the student body at Elbridge were two Healy daughters. One of them was older than her teacher, and the other was a few months younger. They did not even guess his age. They knew only that they were very much impressed with the Reverend Mr. Brownson. He was different. At home they talked about his knowledge and ability. Between themselves, they remarked his arched eyebrows, his Grecian nose, his high forehead, his long graceful hands, and his wavy hair. Each tried to force her sister to invite Brownson to their home; neither did.

John Healy, their genial father, and the distinguished Mrs. Healy had met the minister after his first Sunday services, and had had him out to dinner; but that was different. In nearly every home in the district he had spent a week, and they, with more room than anyone else, had offered no hospitality. Sally was a little embarrassed as she reported her elder sister's neglect. Her mother

smiled imperceptibly as she promised to cover the omission.

The next afternoon found the corpulent John out for his usual drive among his farms; and he routed his return past the school, paused for a visit with the schoolmaster, and brought him home for the beginning of his "turn" in the house on the hill. From their first meeting, Healy had friendship to offer the new minister of his church. He himself was from New Hampshire, and sensed a fellowship for the Vermont man. And Brownson liked his host. Healy was a man of fifty, a lover of books, of comfort, and of the large affairs of life.

For years, this respectable landlord had rested before his fireplace with a calm, generous outlook on life and on the world about him, much of which was his own. The Indians were welcome to life on his domain as long as they wished. He had married happily and had given a free hand to the capable and artistic mother of the household. Youth had grown up about him; he had been tolerant of them, but never a companion to one of them. He could talk with this man as with the white-haired members of his chess club.

Thus, Orestes Brownson was being approved at the very time that he mentally pronounced Healy a man of remarkably high caliber. After a day of reiterating and explaining the obvious, it was restful to bat out problems with such a man. They talked politics, government, and religion through the evening meals and into the night.

But Brownson was not oblivious of the other members of the household. He liked them all. Particularly, he found the younger daughter, Sally, a charming young lady. Her reticence and general refinement of manner were exceptional. She had beautiful dark eyes, a ready quotation in repartee, and a serious mind. Very soon he knew that if he had been permitted to offer Providence his specifications of a perfect wife, they would have described Sarah

Healy. Sally, meanwhile, drew and erased from her slate, again and again, a tall masculine figure topped with an abundance of disorderly hair. She found less interest in previous callers and made no time to see them.

In his autobiographical volume, *Charles Elwood*, Brownson writes:

“There may be intellectual beings that are moved by thought alone,—beings who never feel, but live always in mere abstractions. Such persons are dependent never on the state of the affections, and are influenced not at all by the circumstances around them. Of these beings I know not much. I am not one of them. I have believed myself to have a heart as well as a head; and that in me, what the authors . . . call the affective nature, is stronger by several degrees than the intellectual.”

The accuracy of this estimate of himself is attested by his marrying Sally Healy after only six months' acquaintance. The couple waited only until school closed; and on June 19, 1827, they pledged their vows in Ithaca. Then they moved to Auburn where Brownson succeeded L. S. Everett as pastor of the first Universalist parish of the town, where they lived for a year and where Orestes Jr. was born. *The Gospel Advocate* was published in this town. That magazine had accepted some articles written by Brownson; and shortly, it offered him the editorship.

Sally Healy Brownson became, literally, her husband's companion, his helpmate, and his solace; for Brownson was to pass through years of storm and trial, although their life held much happiness. The first sadness of the home came to Sally herself, through the deep perplexities and anxiety following her husband's settling down to the duties of pastor and editor.

When in April, 1829 the city of Cincinnati staged a nine-day debate on *Religion a Menace or a Benefit*,

Brownson followed every point made by Robert Owen, the infidel philosopher of New Harmony; and he traced every item of response from the Rev. Alexander Campbell, Baptist minister from West Virginia. Many of the magazines of the day carried details of the affair, for it had assumed gigantic proportions. A Baltimore paper said:

"The interest . . . taken . . . may be gathered from the fact . . . the Mayor . . . to convene a town meeting . . . arrangements . . . the two great controversialists . . . audience of twelve hundred persons . . . for nine days to witness the conflict . . ."

It was not new matter to Brownson to read Owen's challenge declaring that the religions of the world were founded in the ignorance of mankind; and that they were the only source of vice, disunion, and misery. This was the sort of thing that he had read at the age of twenty. It had had an upsetting effect at that age, and at twenty-six it was still able to torment him.

Campbell proved to be an able opponent.\* Yet there remained certain questions revived and unanswered in Brownson's mind. It was a heartening gesture of the times when such a subject could be brought out in the open, he thought, and fought right through; but it frightened Sally.

Among the many adjustments necessary to her first year as Mrs. Orestes Augustus Brownson, was that of living under the knowledge that her husband could become as unconscious of her as of himself. Mrs. Healy told her daughter that all men are thoughtless at times—that a man's mind can do only one thing at once, that, when he courts, his other interests are obscured; and that, if he is to succeed in life, courtship cannot continue always. With a woman it is different, she said. A mother puts a dinner

\* Flint's *Western Monthly Review* pronounced it "a combat unparalleled in the annals of disputation," for Owen "fought shy," and hid behind the claim of "irresistible circumstances"; while Campbell "showed manly fight on the open field to the end of the joust."

on to cook, while listening to the prattle of a child; she does not forget the boiling pots while she is binding little bruises, singing a baby to sleep, or mending a rent in a garment.

Sally had not complained, and she wondered how Mrs. Healy had hit upon the thing that she most needed to hear. Through her tears she admitted that loneliness was not too great a price for marrying a genius. Laughingly, she added that her mother was still "binding little bruises." She herself was now a mother also and must become totally unselfish.

Sally was glad that her husband wanted to carry upon his shoulders the responsibility of every cause. He had no regard for his own comfort. He was a man of good habits and high principle; but he did, she thought, forget at times the existence of his wife. Of course he forgot also to eat; and, sometimes, he forgot to go to bed. When she took time to reason, Sally knew that she was a very vital part of his life. He even wore her out with the intensity of his insistence upon her sharing the complete process of his thought in arriving at some conclusion. To his power of sustained reasoning there was no limit; and she could not always help him.

Thus it was that in October, 1829, Mrs. O. A. Brownson had encouraged her husband to go East and consult with the best divines of the church. Having branched into religious journalism, in even a small way, one must be sure of truth in such matters as the doctrines of Original Sin, Predestination, and Hell. She would miss him, and even little Orestes could not take his place; but he must go. Those questions of faith had to be settled in the mind of any minister who was shepherding a trusting flock. Lately the neighboring preachers had accused him of spreading false articles. It was imperative that he be sure.

Brownson agreed. His letters to the Boston divines had received unsatisfactory answers. Evidently he had not

made clear the exact points of his difficulties. He would go on and interview them. He would see Channing, and others who had received more formal education and known more experience than he himself had. He would try, too, to connect with some magazine in the East that would publish his views. He hoped that he would not regret having sold *The Gospel Advocate*. Dolphis Skinner had made out a contract by which Brownson pledged to establish no other religious paper in Auburn within a period of two years.

From the East, Brownson's letters to Sally were not too enthusiastic about his findings. He was enjoying his visits in and about Boston, but there was no expression of content in discovery. Ulysses F. Doubleday, his former publisher, received a letter mentioning the names of Brother Rayner and L. S. Everett, Brownson's predecessor as editor of *The Gospel Advocate*. He reported also that at the pastor's invitation he had "preached to the largest congregation yet," in Hosea Ballou's Boston church. His stay had been for "too short a time to offer an opinion." Doubleday sensed his friend's disappointment in the entire group.

He was right. Brownson was to start back with no more than he knew when he left Auburn. It was a restless and discontented man that routed his return journey through New York and Albany. Travel was slow, and he had time to go over in his mind every detail of his motives for making this disappointing pilgrimage to Boston, the Mecca of Protestant thought in America. He turned back a year and reviewed his appointment to the pastorate of Auburn. It had delighted him at first. It was an advancement over the position of itinerant-minister-school-teacher; and it had offered him the opportunity to establish a closer and more lasting influence over the lives of his parishioners.

That is the way the work had looked only a few months

back. And, as he stared through the dirty train window, he tried to trace the cause of his present religious discontent. He had, at that time, felt a great assurance in faith; and he had enjoyed the confidence of his co-religionists. When he had less to give than now, they had subscribed to his magazine. At first, neighboring ministers had complimented him on his success; his congregation had grown in numbers and in enthusiasm. Then, suddenly, when he had built a more complete doctrine for them, when he had ventured beyond accepted doctrines to the logical inferences to which they pointed, he had met condemnation.

Had he met challenge, Brownson said half aloud, the consequent debate might have unearthed truth. Searching his own motives, he could find no obstinacy of purpose in them; he had no desire to cling to an idle notion. He had meant to discover Christ's message to men. He had endeavored to find it in books; he had asked guidance through letters; and, now, he sat appalled at knowledge of Boston's uncertainty. The ministers there had evaded, and shown annoyance. They agreed upon only two tenets: God exists; and man is, somehow, responsible to Him for his conduct. Having salvaged that much from the wreck of his faith, the minister stretched his stiff limbs, and rose to join in the conversation of an animated group at the other end of the rattling, jolting car.

## CHAPTER IV

### The Working Man's Party

THE passengers he joined were bending into the aisle of the car, exchanging opinions of Fanny Wright by yelling over the noise of the train. One man had started the circulation of a handbill advertising her lecture in Utica on October 25. They paused and looked up inquiringly at Brownson, the friendly newcomer, who had no difficulty in making himself heard. He stood in the aisle, and spoke as to a congregation.

Frances Wright was worth hearing, he said. She had met unfair opposition and prejudice from the church-going public of America. To this, a man ventured that he had looked "so powerful serious when settin' there alone" that they had thought him to be a minister himself. Brownson smilingly admitted his profession; but, at the same time, he claimed responsibility for the inclusion of a defense of Miss Wright in *The Gospel Advocate*. Furthermore, he had quoted freely from her writings. He had meant only to stimulate thought, he said; but the result was "such a furore as only treason might justify." None could deny, Brownson declared, that the specific articles which he had quoted were really meritorious, and, as he had said in the *Advocate*, "deserved to be read by everyone who does not choose to be a bigot."

At that, the passenger who had folded the lecture poster on Brownson's approach, produced it, asking if he recognized the quotation thereon. *The Gospel Advocate* was given credit as the source. Brownson laughed aloud as he

caught the first phrase. With eloquence, he read the paragraph to an applauding audience:

"We are ashamed of our countrymen, that they would exhibit such enmity toward a woman who, whatever may be the correctness of her conclusions, has given no mean proof of an enlightened mind, and a truly philanthropic heart. We regret to see the female part of the community so severe upon one who adorns her sex, and seems anxious to give woman her proper rank in society, the high rank that she ought to fill. Miss Wright may err, and who may not? But, apart from her views on matrimony, which are probably more censured than understood, and censured by more than believe them ill-founded, we have seen nothing in her ethics which should be discarded."

His audience declared themselves proud to have met the fearless preacher who had placed such a paragraph before the readers of his magazine. This brought from Brownson his contention that the church was being wrecked by inefficient leaders who follow their flocks. He trembled with earnestness as he said: "The trusting public asks bread of us; and we have none to pronounce our gifts food or a stone."

With that introduction, Brownson freely voiced his astonishment at finding the leading ministers in Boston primarily interested in culture and literature. Those preachers of the gospel were spending their time with certain social groups, and upon insipid causes with pious names. (An elderly man bent farther forward to be sure that he was hearing correctly.) These preachers, Brownson was saying, were concerned not with dogma, not with doctrinal truth, not with the teaching side of the minister's business. They made no apparent effort to unify divergent groups in their admiring congregations.

Furthermore, they had worried no whit about such important attitudes as belief in the divinity of Christ, or belief in the divinely-inspired-perfect-man-Christ. The burning Hell was accommodatingly out. That was decided; but, beyond that one point of agreement, these ministers differed in their teachings as they differed in their walks or in their tastes at table. Some found excuse for a second marriage following one divorce; others condemned it as roundly as though it were the tenth alliance. They had all admitted their uncertainty about many things. They had even shown a little annoyance at Brownson's insistence that truth was one thing and did not admit of a variety of opinion. They were openly irritated at his contention that divergence at the source of truth led to discouraging redivision of the sects in remote parts of the church. Those whom he had consulted were loath to be disturbed. Perhaps Fanny Wright would shake the haze of their indecision into something like clarity.

That anyone should be content within a fog was a new and exasperating circumstance to Brownson; and the compressed lips and quick gestures showed him to be still profoundly irritated. He raised his voice as he put the question: Why is not religion being sponsored by specialists who study all sides of a problem, as do scientists? Why may not a troubled soul seek out a minister as a perplexed mind would consult a physicist or chemist,—as a sick body would apply to a doctor? Take the lectures of Miss Wright, he continued; they draw large audiences, and not one of her challenges to marriage, property, and religion has been adequately refuted.

The faces before him were serious. He went back to the question of divorce, and told his eager listeners that it was in no sense his personal problem. He had married very happily—a beautiful woman who had given him two fine sons. He was hurrying back now more anxious to reach his home than at any time in his life. The fire

in his hazel eyes changed from fury to warmth as he spoke of Sally, Orestes and the six-month-old baby John Healy Brownson. He was silent for a moment.

Then someone reminded him that he was speaking of divorce in general. Yes, divorce remained a vital problem to many; and it was not being studied by any religious leaders that he knew. Together, he and his little audience decided that religion was wavering and weak in its pursuit of truth because it was stumbling its way through maze after maze of speculative chaos. This led many, they felt, to doubt, to superstition, and to outright infidelity.

America was ripe for radical change; unrest marked the period. In the realm of politics, the domination of conservatives had been shattered at the election of Jefferson and Madison. The purchase of Louisiana and the War of 1812 had unsettled economic conditions. Employment was further threatened by the progress of machinery and steam power. As early as 1817 twelve steamers had penetrated into the stillness of the Middle West waterways. Canals and railroads were building rapidly. Factories were well established; and they were claiming the age as their own. Every new invention put more men out of work. Spiritual discontent was manifest in the multiplication of sects and in the response to the call of the religious revival. Revival appeals were answered by long-journeying pilgrims hungry for soul-satisfaction. And many returned poorer than they had come.

Out of economic and religious hysteria there were growing philanthropies, and communistic organizations; each one being in turn declared the only source of peace and contentment. But these new religious movements were failures before they began. Sometimes they were led by rogues who saw easy financial success in religious fraud. Sometimes they were conceived by business misfits or failures, endowed with hope, and impelled with a certain kindly feeling toward their fellowmen. Possible reforms

were bungled by ignorant fanatics, by enthusiasts without the depth of faith necessary to lend hardihood to their venture.

Had Brownson observed that this Utopian socialism, which took slight root in the practical soil of Britain, had found America immensely interested? Yes, but in so far as this sort of thing was successful, it was a menace to faith and law; for Godwin, the great leader of World Reform, associated his name with its leaders. Godwin was a confirmed atheist. His daring essays declared the gospel story of Eden to be a myth; but, he said, the dream might become a reality upon earth but for law and the makers of law. Shelley, the poet of fancy, had now "married" Godwin's daughter. Those interested in oblique romance were watching developments of that affair, and hoping to see more laws crumble under the demand of what they called liberty.

Brownson himself admitted that he was ripe for change. He could not yet accept Godwin's doctrine that there is no innate principle and therefore no original propensity for evil; but he was beginning to wonder whether all virtues and vices might not be traced entirely to external incidents. And since these incidents made life, what about the general problem of moral responsibility? His new friends, to a man, agreed. Godwin's trial Reform in 1793 had failed in England; but, after all, England had discarded the hopes that made America possible.

Furthermore, Robert Owen, a follower of Godwin, had in 1817 made a temporary success of a communistic experiment in Lanark, Scotland. Dreams such as this might come true if set up in the wide expanse of America. They might prosper in the United States. Simple, sincere pioneers, hungry for peace, freedom, and equality, could make the promise of such a system come true. The settlements had, at least, unity of thought and belief to recommend them. The usual congregation was small, and lacked

the common faith necessary to amalgamate its members into a whole that a strong man could lead with satisfaction.

Brownson left the train at Albany to change for Auburn. So absorbed had he been with the subjects of discussion in the car that he remained oblivious of two important factors on the lecture handbill: the place and the time of the lecture. The bill had, somehow, impressed him as of an event past or in the remote future. But he learned, almost upon the moment of his alighting, that the advertised lecture was to be that evening in Utica. The Auburn train passed through Utica. To hear the much-talked-of-woman was the opportunity of a lifetime. Instantly, he resolved to stop over for a few hours. He would hear, with his own ears, this over-abused apostle of freedom. He would see her, in person, deliver her challenge to the formalities of civilization. Having written of her and accepted blame because of her, his sense of inquiry for truth and his sense of just plain curiosity combined to make him purchase his ticket to Utica, N. Y.

Miss Wright was not a commonplace individual. She was a Scotswoman, a strong, wilful spirit, born to wealth; and she was throwing her possessions away to any she could find who needed them more than she. Brownson knew this; but the young unsophisticated philosopher from Auburn had no slight notion of the personality or real standards of Fanny Wright.

As a child, she had been environed with excessive indulgence alternating with excessive tyranny. This, in the home of her aunt; for both parents had died when the child was but two. Her father had always sponsored revolution. He was among those who circulated Paine's pamphlets on *The Rights of Man* as propaganda before the American Revolutionary War. Mr. Wright had bestowed upon his beautiful daughter his own impetuous disposition and his love for exciting variety in events.

Frances had never known stability. Neither had she felt the need of it. She had dined and danced with strong men with a weakness for interested women. She had clung flatteringly to them. She was a subtle individual with a gift for intimacy in her quick friendliness, sympathy, and enthusiasm. The atmosphere of her presence was charged with a strange power over others.

Mrs. Trollope describes the lady as tall, majestic, regal; with a "deep, and almost solemn expression" in her eyes, and a "finely formed head." Before she was well in her teens, she had learned the power of those soulful eyes and had carried her instinct for leadership far outside of the family circle. Not that she led well, but that she led always.

And now Miss Wright was pursuing her meteoric and exciting career in Owen's Working Man's Party. The Victorian era in America had not taken full possession of the nineteenth century, and Frances hoped to frown down its disapproval by her forwardness. She had always set the tone for whatever group was temporarily hers. She was interesting and amusing. She was daring in speech and conduct. She had charmed such men as she cared to know, including the hero of the American Revolution, the Marquis de Lafayette.

Indeed, the lady had come to the United States at this time in company with the General on his second visit to America. She had been with him in Paris; and had enjoyed, there, the readiness with which men of his circle accepted her wit and impertinence, attended her bidding, and avoided the stiletto of her provoked temper.

Brownson had not heard so much of all this; and, what had come to his attention, he discounted as the fiction of an over-conservative people. This woman was sponsoring, in name at least, the cause of the poor. She was sacrificing her own wealth for the realization of her ideals. That much spoke for her sincerity. Naturally, money and

caste resented her efforts to cancel slavery in all of its forms—slavery of the blacks, slavery of the working classes, and slavery of woman. Economic shackles upon white labor, he agreed, were as strong as the chains of slavery. He was not so sure that he could advocate Miss Wright's ideas about woman.

However, she was a brave soul, misjudged and maligned by men who should have accomplished what she was trying to do; by women, unsophisticated souls, who could make no clear distinction between high morality and the formal conduct imposed by convention. The general mind had pronounced this woman ambitious and vain; and the public mistook her business relations with men for mad infatuations. He would hear her; and, if need be, he would sponsor her cause.

It was, then, with a sense of an extraordinary experience that Brownson found a place in the hall in Utica, and noticed the large audience of thoughtful persons assembled for the lecture; that he heard the speaker's magnetic discourse; that he conversed with Fanny Wright, that evening. And, certainly, she who had sipped wine with the lightest of suave French gentlemen must have found the sturdy, tall, impersonal, young American minister of the gospel a novelty. She would write her friends about Orestes Augustus Brownson, a man distinguished in a dozen different ways. She must have appreciated his enthusiasms and the pungent, original quality of his home-spun philosophy. He was a perfect example of a distinct American type.

In her determination to impress Brownson, the golden-haired Fanny proposed several theories of a provocative nature. Humbly, she told of her failure in the attempt to establish on a tract of land below Memphis a means by which the American slave could free himself. Andrew Jackson had been among her advisers. But despite good intentions and trusted guidance the attempt had proved

to be her greatest disappointment. This, not alone because it fell short of her expectations, but because it had taken almost her entire fortune and left her powerless to try other projects that were dear to her heart. She still believed in the general plan of her scheme for the slaves; but she saw, now, that she had devised the undertaking on too large a scale.

In theory, the slaves would learn to direct their own efforts by working on Miss Wright's land, would repay their purchase money, and would go out from this training camp as free men. The design was perfect. But, in actuality, many of the blacks were indolent, many of them stole from one another; some ran away; some even returned to the masters from whom she had bought them; some disappeared, she knew not where. Subordinates had wasted resources and had failed to carry out her program. All in all, she had worried herself into brain fever and had gone back to Europe for medical care after she had transported the remainder of her colony to Haiti.

She had met Mrs. Shelley while recently in Paris; and she had just started a letter to her in which she had discussed her present plan. She took the unfinished note from her desk and read aloud the paragraph in which she had expressed the hope of devoting her lecture fees and such of her fortune as remained, "to laying the foundation of an establishment where affection shall form the only marriage, kind feelings and kind action the only religion, respect for the feelings of others, the only restraint; and union of interest, the bond of security."

For a longer time than was his wont Brownson had been silent. And he did not immediately answer when asked his opinion. Fanny laughed. Did he not imagine that it was reasonable? Robert Dale Owen, in whose colony in New Harmony she had lived and in conjunction with whom she was now conducting a socialistic journal, had offered the very amusing opinion that "her

courage was not tempered by prudence, and that her enthusiasm lacked sound judgment." She tossed her titian head and confided one more sentence: He had said that her courage had not suffered from humility. Were not white men more truly slaves than their colored servants? Would not Brownson agree that slavery is a common human experience? Had not custom and convention given each one many masters? Did not superstition make cowering slaves of even those who had no fear of their fellows? Was religion a sufficiently sure investment to justify the sacrifices it demanded?

Fanny's forceful personality and the ornate turn of her phrases covered the unsoundness of her logic. Her persuasive words were convincing. Her apparent sincerity made imagination into truth.

After all, Brownson's recent experiences in Boston stood against his instinctive response. Miss Wright questioned further: Why label as sins acts over which man has no control? Religion carried a deal of hypocrisy, and a deal of uncertainty. But, to be sure, she was addressing a minister! How tragic! But, anyway, she must be sincere; and he would forgive, and perhaps convert her. Who knows?

Brownson admitted that, in at least one sentence that she had uttered, their minds were in accord. He had said on a jerky train, today, between New York and Albany, that ministers presumed on the credulity of their followers. Religion had need of a philosophical mind to delve into old pronouncements and new; someone to discover in how far the present civilization has veered from the course mapped out by the Saviour. He would like to undertake it, himself, some day.

Fanny assured Brownson that he, if anybody, could do that thing; and it would be a worthy task for a person of his powers. But, first, would he lend his talents for a few months to the economic problem, to help in the urgent

needs of the poor? She spoke of the injustices of property division; of the factory system with its long hours, its employment and treatment of women and children; of the low wage for all labor; of the unfeeling pride of the aristocracy. All these things gripped the poor as though fate, fortune, or some unseen power, ruled over them. No wonder they were superstitious. Brownson agreed.

Now, it was the hope and plan of the Working Man's Party of the United States, she continued, to grasp the political power in America and to work through legislation to the public schools. Their leaders would there awaken young minds to the power within themselves, and form them to advanced standards. They could then free the poor from the slavery which holds them bound.

Brownson grew eloquent in his response, and Fanny applauded his enthusiasm. But the Party needed propaganda; it needed an editor for a magazine, an editor with judgment, with vision. In short, it needed Brownson, Miss Wright declared. It needed him as manager for the Party in the State of New York, and as editor of *The Daily Sentinel*. This paper would supplement *The Free Enquirer*, which was her personal publication. If there be such a thing as Fate or Destiny, Fanny conceded, it must have put Brownson in her path on this occasion. She was very happy, and superstitious enough, she said, to believe it was a good omen.

Brownson accepted the editorship of *The Daily Sentinel*. His hands were empty and waiting for just that. He considered Miss Wright an honest, outspoken thinker who was trying, as he was, to solve difficulties rather than merely to create doubts. There was comfort in discussing many subjects with as sympathetic a mind as hers. Even among the ministry, he had found no such willing listener, no such earnest questioner. Some of Miss Wright's statements were not to him new presentations, but echoes of his own perplexities. He decided, now, that he would

not preach again as a Universalist minister. He believed in God, and in eternal life; and he knew that he would never make the statement that they do not exist. But, beyond that, the fragments of truth in his possession seemed contradictory. For the present, he would like to give his whole energy to serve the poor.

This Working Man's Party was the very thing for which he had hoped, worked, and searched. At least, it offered organized zeal; and it was, he was convinced, concerned with the truth, the whole, daring truth. Whatever it might prove to be, and whatever the cost to himself, Brownson longed to discover truth. He would hew his way to it, without any master to guide or stay him; and he was happy to be associated with leaders in the American division of World Reform. It echoed the very longing of his heart before he expressed it. Owen and his friends were throwing the weight of their influence toward equal opportunity for the child of poverty and the child of wealth, equal gain for the labor of the poor and that of the middle class, a share of the profits of a firm for both.

With ecstasy in his heart, Brownson boarded the train from Utica to Auburn, twenty-four hours late. He was completely oblivious of the fact that he had already written Sally of the day and hour of his expected arrival. His wife had joyfully gone about the duties of that day. A hundred times, she had told Orestes, and even the wide-eyed baby, who could not understand a word, that his father would be home that evening. Finally, the hollow whistle of the little train distantly announced itself; and Mrs. Brownson swept from the table the little baby-dress that she was measuring to cut a pattern. She deposited it in a drawer, and quickly laid the cloth for the evening meal.

She heard the train stop; she heard it on its way again. Minutes passed. An hour passed. Brownson was such a talker! Of course he would be filled with his new experi-

ences. But must he tell the whole town first? The old feeling of begrudging him to his causes returned; then, finally, everything gave way to anxiety. She imagined all but the actuality: train wrecks, broken bones, death. She bent over little Orestes, and whispered her fears. The baby smiled, as always, when she spoke to him; then he closed his eyes and slept.

When, finally, Brownson arrived, he found a weary, worn Mrs. Brownson; but she was glad to have him alive, and possessed of a contract on a magazine even though quite different from the one that he had traveled East to find. Somehow, Brownson did not consider it immediately necessary to disclose that it was a branch of *The Free Enquirer*. He did say that it was a labor magazine.

Brownson's son Henry tells of the agreeable impression made on his father by the lecture at Utica, and that "it was strengthened by a conversation with the lecturer later in the evening and still further by her visit, soon afterwards to Auburn, where she delivered a course of four lectures. It was agreed between them that he should become corresponding editor at Auburn of *The Free Enquirer*; and in an issue of that journal for December 7, 1829, Miss Wright announced that Mr. O. A. Brownson had held out to her "the hand of friendship, and become attached to *The Free Enquirer* published weekly at 359 Broome Street, New York, by Wright, Owen, and Jennings, editors and proprietors; and at Auburn, State of New York, by O. A. Brownson, corresponding editor."

Elsewhere, Henry Brownson makes specific reference to some of his father's writings of "unchristian character," including his apparent adoption of Fanny Wright's notions of matrimony:

"Understanding by love the passion described by writers of romance as necessary, fatal, irresistible, and not rational, free, voluntary affection existing between the sexes, Brownson argued that it was crim-

inal to take the marriage vows, to promise what is in no one's power to do. He did not, however, nor do I believe that any of the persons connected with *The Free Enquirer* did, carry into their own practice the views they proposed on the subject of marriage. Like community goods, this would be settled by society when enlightened."

To Brownson, the use of political action as a force for the working man seemed a perfect project. He had no notion that he was dealing with swindlers. Thus far he had known, almost exclusively, sincere, well-meaning persons who, if they failed in high resolve or noble attainment, did so through ignorance. He was but twenty-six, and the future stood wide before him, crowded with optimistic dreams. Legislation would soon, he believed, be made to give opportunity to honest ambition. His earlier struggles had been against material odds or mental problems—things that he was fitted by nature to conquer. This would be his first experience with the intricacies of politics. As a politician, Brownson was not to be successful.

By that is not meant that he had no political influence; for he influenced everything he touched. Among other events connected with The Working Man's Party, Brownson acquired a lifelong enemy at the end of his membership in that organization. It will be interesting to follow Orestes through, and out of, its meshes; for his affiliation with it was a series of the greatest blunders of his life.

About a year before Brownson's attention was seriously attracted to it, the Movement had started in Philadelphia. Through Miss Wright, Brownson met Robert Dale Owen, and others among her friends, during the year 1829-1830.

When *The Free Enquirer's* announcement of Brownson's "hand of friendship" appeared in Auburn, hostile opinions began to buzz among Evangelicals and their adherents. The portly John Healy who had been proud to claim

Brownson, the promising young minister, as his son-in-law, was suddenly a humbled and sobered man. He received in silence the expressed sympathy of such men as knew the family well. To a man of Healy's temper pity was not easy of acceptance; and, besides, he was conscious that charity admits of various karat-sterling. He knew that the town was thinking and speaking of nothing else. Calling anxiously upon his daughter, he found her looking worried and not inclined to talk, even to him. She admitted she had not slept well. Mrs. Healy saw no one. Quietly she endured the full agony of her daughter's temporary ache and fear as though it were her own. They had all suffered the greatest humiliation possible to know.

Then, suddenly, without warning, came a worse catastrophe: public notice that Fanny Wright, unwomanly enthusiast of many causes, and shameless advocate of free love, was venturing, by invitation, within the carefully starched precincts of Auburn. The sponsor of her lectures, O. A. Brownson, former minister of the Universalist Church, had announced that the series consisted of four discourses.

This news made a stir in the town. The usual petty chatter of the hour was suspended. Leisurely borrowers of sugar and lenders of pie tins relayed a measure of gossip; and neighbors gasped with relish over the approaching calamity.

There was unanimous condemnation of Fanny Wright. In the kitchens and sewing circles of Auburn, no name but hers was spoken. And the buzz of talk was not alone among the women. Boys lounging in the post office, men sitting about in a general store, whittled, smoked and chewed tobacco, while they individually weighed, and openly condemned, Orestes Brownson for introducing wickedness to their well-living town. Mrs. Brownson went about her daily duties silently, sadly. Her secure confidence was gone; and with it her sweet, human sympathy

for the whole world. She suddenly felt remote and dreadfully alone. No one intruded upon her tragedy.

None dared challenge the giant Brownson himself; but groups melted away as he approached. Their wonder, their curiosity concerning him, their indignation, were evident. He spoke at length to a few incredulous old men about the power of the woman. Her courage in sustaining her principles, be they what they might be, had won him to more than a passing interest in the measures that Fanny Wright advocated.

The night of the first lecture arrived. Swarthy frontiersmen, blunt, determined, and disdainful, gathered in the town hall for the event. They were dressed as for a Sunday service, with white shirts, stiff collars, waxed boots, and gray cravats. A few bearded older men were present. Many middle-aged husbands came in, singly or in groups, and amusedly hailed friends across the hall. There were crowds of boys. The younger set had clean-shaven faces with a well-trimmed fringe of sideburns cropped close below the lobe of the ear or dwindling into a neat frame of fringe meeting below the chin. Swagging lads stood in the back of the hall, and nudged one another for attention to some remark passed behind their hands. High laughter followed, and extravagant gestures helped to make this section of the crowd conspicuous.

Curiosity to see the woman whom they had heard condemned held them all in their places while Fanny kept them waiting. New groups, in their teens, came in little gangs, and cast wagers on their individual abilities to attract the speaker's gaze. No women were in the benches.

Smoke was plentiful, and the odor of beer and wine made the air of the place heavy. Sand brought in on rough boots scraped, with the restless shifting of the standing audience, while they banteringly awaited the arrival of Brownson's protégée. From Elbridge came certain men who had looked on, with envy, while the schoolmaster

and itinerant minister had walked into their circle; had, within six months, won as wife a girl, exceptional in beauty, charm and wealth. For a year and more, they had secretly wished that he would do something to justify the bad names that they had longed to call him. Now, they individually speculated upon Mrs. Brownson's regret of her choice. Every family had sent some representative out to carry back the news; but the more dignified members remained at home.

The *Cayuga Patriot* carried a notice informing the public that the proceeds of the lecture, "are deposited in the hands of a committee of responsible men . . . to be expended . . . in forwarding a system of national, rational, and equal education." That item was apparently in the order of an advertisement.

But the *Patriot* spoke editorially against the lecturer despite the fact that its editors were Doubleday and Allen, both friends of Brownson: "Miss Frances Wright arrived in this village on Thursday last, and lectured in the Court House four evenings. She attracted crowded houses. Her manner was eloquent and fascinating. Her notions of matrimony were not insisted on here. They are such as would uproot society, and in our humble opinion, not improve our condition. She discredits all religion, revealed or natural . . . Her sentiments on this subject are also calculated to tear up the foundations of social order. . . . A newspaper is not the proper place to discuss such topics; but we thought it not improper to apprise the public of the extent of her opinions."

Brownson raged over the "injustice" of such public statements from any one of intelligence. The cut was twice its normal depth because Doubleday, as editor of the paper, had done this stroke against his lecturer. There was fury in Brownson's stride as he walked to the office of Doubleday and Allen. There he asked, in the name of reason, that he be permitted space in the next

issue to state facts in the case. The editor demurred. The facts had been published. The discussion grew loud. Neither side cared who heard his opinion; and when the thunders ceased, each stood in his original position. Finally, Doubleday conceded space for a letter from Brownson with an appended editorial reply. The issue for November 18, carried the following:

“Mr. Editor: As you have made some remarks on Miss Frances Wright’s views of things, you will oblige me by allowing me to state her views more fully than you have done, and I wish to do this the rather, because I have heard much misrepresentation respecting her and her sentiments.

“Miss Wright’s avowed object is the improvement of the condition of mankind . . . She is not, as some would seem to imagine, traveling through the country lecturing against matrimony. Nor is she, as she is represented, desirous of abolishing that institution, she only wishes so to correct its abuses and its errors that it shall be the friend and not the scourge of human felicity. . . .

“Whether her views on this subject would ‘uproot society’ any further than is necessary to ‘uproot’ its evils, I shall not assume the province of determining. For myself, I feel no alarm on this subject, and am willing the subject should be fully discussed.”

Brownson then explained the plan of education in the Wright-Owen scheme, as far as he knew it, and ended, of all things, with this fatal sentence: “My acquaintance with Miss Wright has enabled me to give her views, I believe, correctly.”

Then followed *Remarks*. Doubleday allowed himself two paragraphs of mild satire as an introduction, and then launched into the matter which was Auburn’s sensitive point:

"We are told that she is not desirous of abolishing the institution of marriage. We are acquainted with her writings, and must contradict the above assertion. She disapproves of any institution, any law, or any ceremony, relating to marriage. She would leave the parties . . . liberty to separate when either became tired . . . And what authority has she to teach in this matter? What does she know of the feelings of a virtuous wife deserted by the sole object of her affections? Certainly no more than a blind man knows of colors. . . ."

Brownson felt very much abused. Why should Auburn be so narrow? Cincinnati had arranged for a nine-day discussion about just such matters. Those who had sponsored their debate were looked upon as benefactors to the city and the nation. Twelve hundred persons from local and distant parts had witnessed the battle, and had gone away refreshed by the experience. Ever since he had brought the same problems before Auburn, the town seemed empty. No one sought him out; and, in general, the inhabitants skulked down alleys to avoid conversation with him. One would think he had imported the plague. Sally's sad eyes and silent behavior he interpreted as a deep sympathy for the way others were treating him. More than ever, he must succeed and bring her light heart back again. He threw himself into the Working Man's Party with every ounce of his energy.

Nearly thirty years later, when he included the incident in *The Convert* Brownson was still mystified over the whole affair:

"Her lectures were eminently popular. Her free, flowing and ornate style, French rather than English, —her fine, rich, musical voice, highly cultivated and possessing great power, her graceful manner, her tall, commanding figure, her wit and sarcasm, her appar-

ent honesty of purpose, and deep and glowing enthusiasm, made her one of the most pleasing orators, man or woman, that I have ever heard. The Evangelicals, of course, were hostile to her and said all manner of things against her, for the most part untrue, and did all in their power, not, of course, to disprove her doctrine, but to render her personally odious. This was particularly the case in Auburn, Cayuga County, New York. Auburn was then a village containing between three and four thousand inhabitants, divided, as usual in all our villages, into a large number of sects. The hard things that were said of Fanny came to her ears, and at the close of one of her lectures, she quietly, and in the sweetest manner imaginable, remarked: 'We have here, this evening, considered the subject of religion. Tomorrow evening, at half past seven o'clock, we will meet again at this place to discuss the subject of morals. I observed in driving through your beautiful village today, spires of six meeting-houses, belonging to as many religious denominations, and I am told that there are two or three other denominations that have not as yet erected meeting-houses for themselves. It is evident that religion must have been well discussed among you, and that you are eminently a religious people. I have traveled much, and visited many countries, and in no place have I been so uncourteously received, or been the subject of so much personal insult, as in your most religious village. Perhaps it will not be inappropriate to spend one evening in discussing the subject of morals.'"

With a perspective of twenty-eight years, Brownson had not awakened to the fact that his apparent disregard for Sally Healy had caused the particular indignation awaiting Fanny in Auburn. This inability to penetrate circum-

stances or to see motives behind behavior, marked Brownson's entire life. It seems inexplicable that a man of brilliant intellect could actually be so stupid. Was he, perhaps, feigning ignorance in the matter? Was he stubbornly holding to a certain public attitude, after he was personally convinced that he had been a fool before the public and a brute to his wife? No. Brownson had neither the desire nor ability to feign; and he held stubbornly to nothing. He was totally unconscious of the fact that bringing Fanny Wright to his home town, and sponsoring a free-love advocate there, within the call of Mrs. Brownson's presence, could be reasonably interpreted as an insult to his wife.

Brownson understood only his own motives and the spoken declaration of other persons. Every word in his vocabulary, he saw through to its roots; and he could juggle with ideas to make them fit a perfect, logical pattern. He grasped meanings so clearly that he was impatient with the usual mind's slight power of penetration. But a group of human beings, each with a hand behind his back, might declare themselves one-armed men; and Brownson would never pause to challenge the statement. He was, himself, absolutely truthful. His youth, spent alone or with guileless persons, gave him no preparation for dealing with complex characters or circumstances; and experience did nothing for him in that matter.

Some shrewd persons meet every new mind with challenge. To them each man is dishonest until he proves himself trustworthy, to a certain, or absolute, degree. On the contrary Brownson accepted each man as honest. Furthermore, he never grasped the full significance of the fact that evidence may be untrue and yet be believed by every single individual except the principals in the case.

It is important, in our interpretation of Brownson, to recognize this blind-spot in his intelligence; for, to the end of his life, it caused him to stumble into irreparable

blunders. Again and again he accepted as feasible every scheme, recommended in words, that came to his hand. As one solution of a difficulty after another failed, he cast it from him in disappointment, and had no more to do with it. But the proverb of the burned child had no application with him. One painful experience did not cause him to reject or even to half-accept the next false issue presented. He took each and the next, and the next, to his heart hopefully. He was a detective in search of the truth, and he took every possible clue as *the* clue until it failed.

How, then, could one explain the fact that Brownson chose such a noble woman as his wife? How did it happen that his home-life was not a tragedy? How did it happen that the mother of his children was a real home-maker and a comfort to him in the thousand trials that came into his life? Really penetrating men, shrewd in their judgment of human beings, have sometimes found themselves deceived in the all-important decision of choosing a wife. One would have to know a great many things about members of the Healy family before a full explanation might be offered in this matter. It looks to have been either sheer luck, or the skillful management of perhaps Mrs. John Healy. In that one circumstance, Brownson could have been the decided, and not the deciding figure. But, if that is true, he never knew it.

Henry, the third son of the family, is Brownson's biographer. His mother must have told much about those early troubrous days; for there would seem no other way for him to learn of them:

“Brownson's wife was so patiently constituted that whatever she may have suffered from marital harshness, she was always affectionate and loving to husband and children, ever cheerful and devoted to their comfort and happiness. Of her it may be said,

her dignity consisted in being unknown to the world; her glory was the esteem of her husband; her pleasure the happiness of her family.' One of her greatest sorrows was the unchristian character which her husband's writing and speeches assumed a few years after their marriage. She had been taught the so-called Orthodox faith and was a devout believer in it; but she knew that it was hopeless to try to bring her husband back to his belief by attempting to argue the matter out with him. She could only hope and pray, patiently and hopefully. The years passed by, and Brownson not only accepted all of Christianity which his wife believed, but went further and embraced all of Christianity which Christ taught. He often read his articles to his wife before publication, and attached great importance to her judgment; indeed, he often said that, intellectually, she was his superior."

Henry's statement that "the years passed by" indicates the long endurance which eleven months of agony meant to Mrs. Brownson; for in less than a year Brownson was out of the Working Man's Party and it was dead. But during that time he was heart and soul with its organizers. He advertised it as a hope for hungry minds and honest souls oppressed under the social system of the day. Men believed him because he was known to be honorable. Meanwhile, he was deceived merely because he had taken the leaders at their word.

The *Cayuga Patriot* answered him and every other propagandist in language aimed to recall Brownson from the ranks of the new party. Thus, when *The Free Press* of June 23 said:

"Although many obstacles have been thrown in the way of this party, it still goes on, 'conquering and to conquer,' unchecked in its course by every falsehood which party malignity can invent. It has been

unjustly branded with the names INFIDELITY and AGRARIANISM."

Doubleday countered:

" . . . The party, as originally started in the city of New York, was founded on atheism and agrarianism. Tom Skidmore was the father and Frances Wright the mother of it. In the country its objects are altogether political. . . . The original WORKING MEN really had objects in view distinct from their political leaders. They intended to procure an equal division of property, and alter the whole structure of society. But the leaders of our political working men here, are not agrarians. They are mere political hypocrites, who wish to use public credulity to acquire power. To be sure they consider it an object to rally under a name, that they may secure the support of a few thousand 'agrarians and infidels' for their governor ticket; but any further than that they, with some exceptions, care nothing about infidelity or agrarianism."

But only the leaders within the party could break Brownson's confidence in them by telling him in words that they were not really aiming to serve the poor; for the literature of the party was less revolutionary than the pamphlets of Tom Paine. Indeed, they seemed to him to advocate no more than the ultrademocratic principles of Thomas Jefferson. The Working Men hoped merely to grasp the political power of the state as a means to reach the school system. Through education they could inoculate Communism proper.

Frances Wright had expressed herself as clearly as that to Brownson; but his preconceived idea of Communism made him envisage only a common quality of opportunity and education for all. He had read the minutes of the Philadelphia meeting in which it had been unanimously resolved:

"There can be no real liberty without wide diffusion of real intelligence . . . until means of equal instruction shall be equally secured to all, liberty is an unmeaning word, and equality an empty shadow."

If the Working Man's Party offered equal instruction to all, its leaders would find in Orestes Brownson a spokesman willing to dedicate his life to their cause. The problem of the poor was his chosen task. With the fervor of a religious zealot, he grasped this opportunity to serve the type of person that his childhood had known,—simple, frugal, hard-working men whose ignorance of the technicalities of law made them an easy prey to high-class robbers.

At last, the dream of helping the whole little world to which Royalton belonged had become a reality. The poverty that his mother had known would not be the experience of any in the generations to come. His children would have opportunity such as his imagination could hardly follow. His messages to the wealthy and to the poor were both incorporated in the literature of the Working Man's Party. They were thoughts that had not slumbered in his mind since his conversation in the stables of Brooks, the man with the shiny, spirited horses. Brooks had said that Orestes would be a great man some day. At least he was on the way to the doing of great things.

When Frances Wright discovered that the native American, Brownson, was drawing more adherents to the cause than all of the others put together, she advised that the giant orator from Auburn be offered some share in the contributions toward the Party's success. Fanny's mind was quick rather than penetrating. She meant to seal Brownson to the Working Man's Party. This gesture would have bound a hireling; but it only awakened a shepherd.

Brownson was summoned. After compliments upon his success, Miss Wright and Owen laid before his astonished

gaze their entire brilliant design. They caught the shocked awakening in the face of the zealous apostle of justice; but they interpreted it as admiration. It encouraged them. They offered him shares in such booty as would make them all millionaires within a year after the election.

The response was utter silence. They could not hear the whole stupendous structure of Brownson's ideal state clatter in thunderous fragments about the ears of the American. But Brownson heard it with such unmistakable clearness that he saw no need for words in the matter. His reply was only: "You, even more than my former friends, have misunderstood me." He reached for his hat and was out of the door in two strides.

In *The Convert* Brownson tells the plan of the Party to catch the minds of very young children in a new system of schools to be tried first in New York:

"These schools were intended to deprive as well as to relieve parents of all care and responsibility of their children after a year or two of age. It was assumed that parents were in general incompetent to train up their children in the way that they should go, to form them with the right sort of tempers, characters, and aims; and therefore it was proposed that the state should take the whole charge of the children, provide proper establishments, and teachers and governors for them till they should reach the age of majority. This would liberate the parents and secure the principal advantage of a community of goods.

"The aim was on the one hand to relieve marriage of its burdens, and to remove the principal reasons for making it indissoluble; and on the other, to provide for bringing up all children in a rational manner to be reasonable men and women, . . . free from superstition, all belief in God and immortality, or regard for the invisible, and make them look upon this

life as their only life, this earth as their only home, and the promotion of their earthly interests and enjoyments as their only end. . . . Our theory was that the child is passive in the hands of the educator, and may be molded as clay in the hands of the potter. . . . Our dependence was placed on education in a system of public schools managed after a plan of our own, or rather of William Phiquepal, a Frenchman, subsequently the husband of Fanny Wright . . . Him I never trusted. But the more immediate work was to get our schools adopted. To this purpose it was proposed to organize the whole union secretly, very much on the plan of the Carbonari of Europe, of whom, at that time, I knew nothing. . . . How far the secret of the organization extended, I do not know; but I do know that a considerable portion of the State of New York was organized; for I, myself, was one of the agents for organizing it. I, however, became tired of the work, and abandoned it after a few months."

In that simple way Brownson related the experience. He is not quite exact in saying that he "tired" of the Working Man's Party. He uses that method of dismissing a story which has no further purpose in the long narrative of his finding the Catholic Church. Brownson dropped the Working Man's Party because he was convinced that it was not the instrument for his hand; its aim was not the goal of his search. What sort of men and women would be turned out from the schools that it planned to sponsor? Brownson thought that they could be but little learned animals. He realized, after his six months of hard labor in its cause, that he could not be identified with the Working Man's Party.

But he was still editor of the *Daily Sentinel*. He owed it to his followers to inform them of the trap into which he had all but led them. The contest for Governor of New

York was already opened, and Brownson had stood staunchly behind the Party's candidate. Granger was sure to win, and through him the communistic schools were sure to be established, unless the editor would act quickly.

Thurlow Weed, the campaign manager, had just put his worries away and had begun to count his triumphs, when there appeared in the Party's paper an announcement that brought all his thoughts to a sudden halt. E. T. Troop, of the Jackson party, was declared to be Brownson's personal choice for the office of governor. Weed knew that Brownson's public would turn the tide. And so it did. Troop was elected. Such rapid and incisive action does not signify that Brownson was sufficiently "tired" of anything to accept fate without a fight. To continue from Brownson's account in *The Convert*:

"This defection ruined my journal as a party journal; and, a few days after the election, I disposed of it to my partner, and ceased to be its editor. The truth is I never could be a party man, or work in the traces of a party. I abandoned, indeed, after a year's devotion to it, the Working Man's Party, but not the working man's cause; and to that cause I have been faithful according to my lights and ability.

"I was not naturally a radical, or even inclined to radicalism; but I had a deep sympathy with the poorer and more numerous classes. This sympathy I still have, and trust I shall have as long as I live. I believed, and still believe, that the rights of labor are not sufficiently protected, and that the modern system of large industries, which requires for its prosecution heavy outlays of capital, or credit, makes the great mass of operatives virtually slaves,—slaves, in all except the name, as much as are the Negroes on one of our Southern plantations. It is a system which places the laborer, at the same time, under all of the disadvantages of freedom."

The name of the party had been chosen to gain many members; but it was a misnomer. The title had not been chosen in haste, or by accidental circumstance. It was a deliberate attempt at political advancement through catch-words in a campaign. In America, the scheme has been used repeatedly since Jackson's day. The slogan promises nothing; but it connotes a pledge. And the laborer finds himself voting again and again for the same hard-visaged villain under a variety of masks wearing a sympathetic expression. Brownson had joined the Party because of what its name signified to him; he left it when he was convinced that its title meant fraud.

Henceforth, Brownson would be an individual for all parties to reckon with, and for no party to reckon on. He stood alone, with a certain public that he could claim as his own, and whose membership was to grow. Fanny Wright quarreled with Owen; and she fled with Phiquepal back to France where under his own name, Darusmont, he married her.

It seems worthy of remark that Brownson foresaw, in 1830, that the only possible trying-ground for successful communism would be in Russia. At first, there seems contradiction between his inability to act within a political party and his almost prophetic judgment on national trends. But the individualistic qualities, that prevented party membership, militated not at all against his logical reasoning. Trends follow logical sequence; and, in this field Brownson was at home.

Politics as a science, Brownson grasped readily; but practical politics, the tactful managing of lesser minds, the escape from being managed, the controlled suavity of manner which may signify great wisdom and sanctity, or great cleverness and villainy, was no part of Brownson. He could not work in a party as a leader, because he could not meet intrigue on its own grounds; and he could

not work as a party follower, because he maintained absolute independence of decision.

In November, 1829, Brownson declared himself finished with politics; but the Machiavellian Thurlow Weed looked upon the stroke of abandonment as a gesture of doubtful value. He busied himself immediately to make assurance doubly sure. There was a touch of grim humor in his tying the unbeautiful corpse of the young Party about Brownson's neck. He turned out reams of propaganda showing labor's sponsor as its enemy and as a traitor to the cause.

For the time, Brownson was silent. He had no defense to offer. Every ounce of his influence and energy had gone into the blind promotion of a stupendously evil design against labor, education, homes, and the nation. During the past six months he had lost the confidence of such men as Doubleday and Healy. But, by miracle, he had been permitted to see his blunder as he drove headlong toward the destruction of God's children. Even St. Paul was struck blind in such circumstance.

Brownson had swerved the course of his rash lead in time. New York saved, the nation was not exposed to nineteenth-century communism. It had not yet grasped power when he struck the Working Man's Party a blow from which it did not recover. Only small sporadic "Granger" groups survived. Meanwhile, he had learned the unforgettable lesson that man needs God,—that there is no such thing as independence of Him. The whole plan was utterly illogical, as he viewed it in his sober senses. Empty promises of a dream theory had left dust in Brownson's throat. Like a bloodhound tricked in a scent, he turned back to religion. But, without faith in such sects as he had met, he set out to form a Church of the Future and to seek a Second Messiah.

## CHAPTER V

### The Independent Minister

AFTER his interview with the leaders of the Working Man's Party, Brownson returned to Auburn a humbled and an almost broken man. When Orestes entered his house quietly and sat down Sally had not the slightest notion what to expect. She thought him ill, and began at once to prepare his malaria medicine. He set it aside. Then he told what had happened,—of the climactic ending of his interview, and of his determination to use the last issue of his *Sentinel* to undo his blunder. His wife's face lighted; and he looked up to meet gladness and exaltation. He had not failed. He had succeeded heroically. Sally declared that she had only tried to hope and pray that he would win in just this way.

But Brownson knew that his reputation and his bank account were equally at zero. With his wife he reviewed his public life. First, he had angered the Universalists. Then, he had rendered himself locally unpopular, and had come to all but fists with Doubleday. Besides the enemies that he had made through editing the *Daily Sentinel*, he would acquire a new group through his final number of the same. He pictured disappointed party leaders standing aghast; shrewd employers sitting back as after a quelled dispute in the factory; and, worst of all, sullen, bitter laborers spitting curses upon their gullibility in having hoped in one more fraud. Just at the time that he had wished to lay prosperity in the lap of the nation, to encircle homes with bounteous opportunity, and to fill

the heart of Sally Healy with pride and triumph, he had nothing to give and nothing to hope.

But Sally was jubilant. Her husband had adhered to principle, and that was gain worth all of his losses. As to money, her father— But she didn't finish that sentence. Brownson hoped that it might never come to that. He was conscious that his recent experiences with the Working Man's Party had developed in him new powers of leadership. It had given him a zeal of utterance which in turn held his listeners spellbound. He now knew himself to be a born leader of men; he was destined to a following in whatever fresh course or novel task he undertook. But what would it be?

Mrs. Brownson thought that he should return to the ministry. He had never wilfully led anyone astray. If the coming number of the *Sentinel* could both kill the Working Man's Party, and reinstate him with the church! Brownson did hope to strike a telling blow to the organization that was bent upon enslaving labor; but he could not see into the future, and know that Communism would not raise its head again in America for a hundred years. For the present it was enough to hope that it would do no harm to the children of the rising generation. Striking from within lent force to his power. The glory of crushing the whole Wright-Owen scheme appears not to have been cited by historians. In so far as Americans became conscious that a calamity had been averted, they seemed to ascribe the miracle to some chemical constituent in the air over America. The perennial buoyancy of the citizen of the United States, and his sense of unchallengeable safety assure him and his neighbor, "It can't happen here."

Brownson finally agreed to employ his new-found power in the pulpit. Even there he believed that he could now draw adherents from many sources if he could establish a magazine to supplement his sermons. His optimism was justified. He was moving toward the most influential

period of his life. But, as he looked about to get his bearings, he found that he had no inclination to re-identify himself with the Universalists or any other denomination:

“Truth is the property of no one sect; righteousness is the exclusive boast of no one denomination. . . . To join any one, you must support its falsehoods as well as its truths, or they will cast you out of the synagogue. You must study to conceal the faults of your party, and often be compelled to suffer reproach for the misconduct of your associates. . . .

“I do not speak at random, my friends, I speak from experience. I was a Universalist—a Universalist minister. I was so unfortunate as to have doubts; I withdrew myself from the denomination to which I belonged, and ceased to preach. What was the consequence? Approbation for my honesty? No. They excommunicated me, and published me from one end of the country to the other, as a rejector of Christianity, as an unprincipled villain. This is the principle by which all sects are governed. . . . Will it not be the wisest course to sit down with the remark, ‘my church is right, at least I will not enquire, lest haply I find it in the wrong?’

“To preach righteousness, then, I do not conceive it necessary to urge you to join a church. I wish you to observe all the good there is in any or all the churches, to ascertain all they have of truth, . . . ; but, if you will be wise, you will be aware how you receive their fetters, and place yourself in a situation by which you must father their faults as well as their virtues.”

That was the gist of his first sermon after returning to the ministry. It was delivered in Ithaca, New York, about thirty miles from his Auburn home. The date was February, 1831. His early religious principles and his deep

love for the unknown God of majesty, mystery, and wonder, had returned. But because his faith in God had been stronger before his entrance into any denominational group, he now identified himself with no sect. Brownson believed that the best, in all that he had experienced, could be incorporated into what he was pleased to call a religion of humanity—philanthropy.

He was not a Christian in the sense that a Christian worships Christ. The minister believed, at this time, only that Christ was a model man, a great reformer; that Christ was the greatest of all men; yet only a man. Brownson thought himself a Christian because he gave publicity to the name of Christ, and he had no ill to say of Him.

The *Philanthropist* magazine was beginning only its second year. It was not sufficiently well established to draw the best material to its pages. Therefore, it was delighted with Brownson's philosophy of life as it appeared in the essays that he offered. The editor accepted his ideas concerning religious affiliation; he accepted everything that Brownson sent, and the jobless man welcomed its slim payments. The great Unitarian, Channing, began to write for the same magazine. In one number in which the two men appeared, Brownson said that the Unitarians held within their teachings all that was worthy of Universalism without its "puerile philosophy." The article appeared near one of Channing's eloquent sermons. Channing read it, and a correspondence between the two men followed. It was his encouragement that determined Brownson, in the summer of 1832, to purchase and edit the *Philanthropist* and to seek a pulpit in the East.

Mrs. Brownson also urged the move. She could see her husband's health and spirit failing. Besides, none but herself and God knew in how many ways she had suffered from her neighbors since December 7, 1829, the day that the village paper carried the announcement copied from Miss Wright's *Free Enquirer*: "Mr. O. A. Brownson has

held out . . . the hand of fellowship, and has become attached . . . as . . . corresponding editor." The words had burned into her brain; by merely closing her eyes she could see them at any hour of any day.

Clad in a shabby, though carefully mended suit, Orestes started East in July to search for greener pastures. John Healy took his daughter and his grandsons to Elbridge, for the interim of Brownson's absence, after Sally had seen her husband off in Ithaca. By August 24, Brownson had gone as far as Brattleborough, Vermont, and found time for a letter to his wife:

"My dear,

"I ought to have written you sooner, but I have been flying about with such rapidity that I could hardly find a stopping place. My health is, in the main, good. I was a little indisposed about a fortnight since, but I was in good harbor at my worthy friend, Dr. Willoughby's, Newport. I have heard from you only once since you left me at Ithaca. I pray God you may be well, and also the little boys, I think of you often; my little boys come to me in my dreams. I embrace you in my sleep, but I awake alone. A kind Father above will yet smile upon us.

"The object of my journey, I think, will be answered. My good friend in Trenton gave me a new hat and coat; so I am decently dressed. I preached two lectures at Little Falls, one at Troy, as I believe, to good acceptance. Will spend next Sabbath in Walpole, N. H., a short distance from Charleston where resides your uncle Jesse from [whom] I had the pleasure of hearing a few days since. He belongs to a Unitarian parish. I shall visit him, I think, as I promised to preach a Sabbath for the Rev. Mr. Crosby, minister of his parish. God has prospered me thus far better than I could expect. I am received by those

Unitarian clergymen I have met with a warmth, a cordiality, and a respect which is peculiarly soothing.

"Rev. Mr. Brown, Unitarian minister with whom I now stop, received this morning a letter from Troy, New York, which was very pleasing. It informed him that active measures were about being made there for me, and requested him to follow me, if I had left him, with a line not to engage till I should hear from my friends in Troy. The letter intimates a design to have me publish my paper in Troy, and adds, 'What a treasure we might obtain in Mr. Brownson.' So, it is barely possible that I may locate in Troy. It is a delightful city, and is a desirable location.

"It is thought that I may easily obtain a parish in New England. I prefer Troy. The New England people are kind, warmhearted, but fastidious and notional; and I believe New York State the field after all for which I am best fitted. Say what they will, New England has not the [*here an illegible word*] and free view of New York. In science, in literature, in reading, it is before us; but in bold men, in activity of thought, in impatience of restraint, New York is abundant years in advance. With us, the people are in advance of the clergy; here, the clergy are fifty years, yes, a hundred years before the people.

"Do enjoy yourself as much as you can. Make yourself easy about me. I will venture to bid you hope, and I do not say it merely to keep your spirits up; but because I think I may say so with propriety. I feel myself that we shall see better times. God grant we may. Give my love to all the family. Tell the little boys, 'Pa wants to see and kiss them.' May Heaven protect them and you, my dear wife. Of His love feel confident, and of mine passionately and forever

Yours in the tenderest of affection, O. A. B."

Months passed before Brownson found a suitable location. There were many matters to consider from both the point of view of the congregation and that of the minister. The Unitarians were willing to accept anyone recommended by Channing; but no one in the organization was authorized to appoint pastors, or to remove them from one parish to another.

Meanwhile Brownson was assured that his family suffered no real need; that was well, for his earnings were little beyond his traveling expenses. We catch up with him on October 15, in Petersham, Massachusetts. The letter, addressed to Sally at Elbridge, reveals his mental and spiritual outlook:

“My dear:

“I should have written you sooner, but I have been driven along by such a bustle as is usual with me. I shall write the first of my letter today, for I feel in the mood for it; but I may not conclude it under some days.

“To begin, my health is not very good just this moment owing to a slight cold, and too great fatigue; but, upon the whole, I am one hundred percent better as to my general health than when I left Ithaca. I hope that you and the little boys continue good. You know how much I want to see, and how anxious I think about you.

“You may wish to know how I came here. Well, I attended an association of Unitarian clergymen at New Salem, about nine miles from this, last Tuesday. The association was very pleasant. There was one public service. A sermon was preached by myself, and, I believe, to general satisfaction. It was criticized pretty closely in council, but pronounced ‘good.’ The remark by one aged clergyman was acquiesced by all. ‘It,’ said he, ‘has not often fallen

to my lot to hear a discourse in which I was so well pleased.' I went from Salem to Athol, a promising town in Worcester Co., where I preached a lecture for the Rev. Mr. Nevon which I believe was well received. Mr. Nevon brought me here, a distance of 8 miles, to the home of the Rev. Mr. Willson, to whom I had letters from Truxton, New York. We negotiated an exchange. Mr. Willson went to Walpole, about 50 miles, for me yesterday, and I officiated for him. My congregation was large, and I believe my services there more than acceptable. Today, I go to Templeton to attend another association, and shall aim to be back at Walpole next Sabbath. I have seen no Unitarian parish yet that I could think of in preference to Walpole. Walpole suits me.

"You may be curious to know how I find myself by the side of Unitarian clergymen. Well, my dear, pardon my vanity. I will speak what I believe truth. I must premise that I have seen only the ordinary class. They are all respectable but with rather narrow views. I have seen no one yet that made me feel small, and the popularity of my discourse proves that the people do not deem me inferior. In Walpole, where have preached some of the greatest men of the order, I have been pronounced superior to any of them. Probably this is exaggeration. My own conviction is that I am inferior only in mere useless browsing, but superior in practical knowledge. I do not think that I have met here a clergyman who has so sifted the human heart, and who is so capable of taking enlarged and comprehensive views of religion as myself. I believe it is in my power to impart two ideas where I may receive one. My talents are decidedly more popular than most that I have met. So much for vanity."

But apparently these opinions are not based upon vain self-conceit; for he is most convincing as he continues his letter and shows the requirements of the place in which he later served:

“The trustees in Walpole say they want a man that can take a high rank among New England clergy; and they say I can, and they believe will do it. It is most probable that you will receive a call to settle there. I feel attached to the people and should regret necessity of looking for another parish. Still, I have nothing to discourage, not a single mishap as yet. O, how kind is our Heavenly Father!

“When I shall see you I know not. I started to make provision for the little ones, and I dare not say until I have accomplished my errand. I will be as expeditious as possible. But I must do my work thoroughly. It is better to suffer a little now from absence that we may be comfortable a long time together hereafter, than it is to precipitate affairs, and have everything to do over again.”

That is what he wrote on October 15; and he did not mail the letter for two weeks. Meanwhile, in Elbridge, Mrs. Brownson was as fidgety as a cricket. She needed clothes, and she needed time to make them. She feared a sudden message begging her to come at once. The children were well provided; their grandmother had taken care of their needs. Sally postponed her own shopping. John Healy had wished to dress her up fittingly as soon as she came into his home. His money was hers; but Sally knew that it would please Orestes to take care of her needs himself if he could.

Her pride had held Healy's insistence at bay with fair success until the August letter. Indeed! If her husband could accept a coat and hat from a friend, Sally Healy Brownson could take a couple of each from her own

father. Caught, the poor little church mouse went out with her mother and bought yards and yards. Then followed weeks of measuring, cutting, pinning and sewing.

On October 29, Brownson finished his Petersham letter in Walpole. It brought many types of relief. His health was good . . . the appointment was all but definite . . . the salary would be five hundred dollars:

“—not large, but we can live on it.

“My love to you and the little boys. Compliments to all. I shall write soon again; but you must write me once a week, no failure, at peril of giving me great pain.

“If John can aid you in obtaining clothing for you and the little boys, I wish he would; as you will need considerable before you come here, and I wish it might be furnished by him. Be in good heart. God bless you and protect you, and grant we may meet again soon.

“Yours as ever, O. A. B.”

With that much settled, John Healy had a free hand; and it was the Queen of Sheba, and two little princes, who answered the call to Walpole when it came.

She was glad to get away from the neighborhood of Auburn; not that she was so optimistic as to believe that Walpole, New Hampshire, would be a new world,—that none in Walpole had heard of the Working Man’s Party, as an organization of infidels, once sponsored by their new pastor. The Browns would not be starting anew exactly; but there would be the welcome absence of personal animosity against Brownson. She herself could lay aside what she could not understand, the Fanny Wright episode, and have an end to it. Her friends could not realize they had caused her more worry and suffering than those persons who were personally indifferent. It would be best to start over.

Orestes could win his congregation. She was sure of that. And she would be away from life-long neighbors who excused, in themselves, every rudeness of curiosity under the head of interest in her welfare and happiness. She had been constantly facing the dilemma of answering the most unthinkable questions about domestic felicity in the Brownson household, or of refusing to answer. Inquiries were leveled straight into her mind by shrewd old ladies who missed no quiver of an eyelid. If she refused to answer she set the gossips sipping the delectable tea of horrified surmise.

She was relieved to imagine a place where she would be permitted to forget an unhappy chapter in her life. As time proved, she did forget it; for, since she had first known Orestes, it was the only event of their existence that tended to wedge them apart. The entire experience had drawn her nearer to Orestes himself, to her big understanding father, and to her quiet, thoughtful mother. She would miss them in going to New England; but her people agreed, it would be better for the couple to leave Auburn, —better even apart from the advantages to Brownson, himself, in a social, financial and religious way.

Mrs. Brownson found her husband's choice of location in Walpole a beautiful spot, and the home itself a delight. It stood on a height overlooking the Connecticut River near Bellows Falls. Sally loved the view. Walpole is about seventy-five miles south of Brownson's birthplace. The climate was that of Stockbridge, and it freed him of every vestige of malaria. He was very busy here. He preached as many as four sermons each week, and reached into Massachusetts with a series of lyceum lectures. His income grew.

Meanwhile, between discourses, Brownson devoted himself to the outlining of a religion designed to possess the dogma of the Catholic Church and the freedom of Protestantism. He found Cousin delightful reading, but

he could not concede that ideas are derived from either the senses alone or in combination with the poetic faculty. Philosophy for its own sake did not hold Brownson's interest. He valued it only as an instrument to search out truth. He was much attracted by Cousin's assertion that all sects or systems are true in what they affirm, and false in what they deny. To glean a perfect creed he began to examine them all.

Back in 1829, Brownson had published a *Creed*. It was no creed at all, for it contained no statement of belief in the supernatural. It pictured the ideal man as honest, benevolent, self-supporting, generous with his talents, and possessed of faith. The only important thing about that manuscript was the note appended:

"If I publish my creed, consistency may require me to defend it; and when I have once enlisted my self-love in its defense, I may become blind to the truth, and may choose rather to abide by my first decision than to submit that I have decided wrong."

He believed that many worship their creed with more devotion than they give to God, and he pledged himself to labor diligently for truth alone, and to support no creed publicly, unless it satisfied his private conviction. He was ever to be on guard against human respect.

Now, in 1834, he applied Cousin's principle of eclecticism in his examination of Catholicism:

"I found, taking it as represented to me by Heine and the Saint-Simonians, that its principle was exclusively spiritualism, and the neglect or depression of the material order. It fitted men to die, but not to live; for heaven, but not for earth,—promising a heaven hereafter, but creating none here. Then I proceed to Protestantism . . . based on exclusive materialism . . . It takes care of this life, but neg-

lects that which is to come . . . What is wanted is the union of the two in all that they have that is affirmative."

While he labored with these ideas, he became somewhat of a torment to his neighbor ministers. They were comfortable in their parishes until Brownson set the world agog with questions they could not answer. As a means of satisfying their people they called Revival Meetings. Brownson condemned them as too emotional in tendency, and lacking in the power of solid helpfulness. Earnest pilgrims traveled hundreds of miles to such gatherings, and Brownson asserted that they deserved more than a passing satisfaction.

On request he did preach once or twice at these meetings; but he considered Revivals always inadequate and often harmful. He read untiringly from the conclusions of Leroux, Kant, and Malebranche. Then he began looking about him for a worthy head for the new religion which he was working out. To this end he made a tour in and around Boston, meeting and judging distinguished Unitarian ministers. He wrote home from Fall River, on February 19, 1834:

"My dear, dear wife,

"I have received only one letter from you. Whether it be yours or Mr. Whitmen's fault I know not; but I hope you are all well and meet with no troubles. [The third son, William, was only six weeks old.] I expect now to be in Walpole next week on Saturday morning to breakfast.

"I was much pleased with Canton. I think probably they will invite me to settle with them; but whether or not I shall accept is uncertain. I do not think I should gain anything in accepting except access to Boston and Cambridge libraries.

"I spent last week in Boston. Tuesday, called on

Dr. Channing, found very well, spent a few very pleasant hours with him. Wednesday dined with him at his house. Thursday, I preached for Mr. Frothingham, dined with Mr. Ripley, editor of the *Christian Register*. Like him very much. Friday, dined at Mr. Mason's; had for company Mrs. Parkman, Dr. Channing, and Mr. Gasinette. Pleasant time.

"Mr. Ganneth told me that I was a great favorite with Mr. Mason's family. I like them much. There is great ease and simplicity combined with their high style of living. I came here last Saturday. I find mud in great quantities. No snow here,—none of any consequence this winter. This place is 50 miles from Boston,—nearly south; 17 from Providence; 17 from Tannton, 15 from New Bedford, about 18 from Newport, Rhode Island, and 12 from Dr. Channing's summer residence. He is anxious I should come here, but I do not find much to make me wish to come. The place, I have no doubt, is pleasant in the summer. It is rapidly increasing, has about five thousand inhabitants, and six religious congregations. The Unitarian congregation last Sabbath was not over one hundred and twenty. They are building a great overgrown house in which their congregation will lose itself. They have invited a minister to settle with them; but have failed as yet to get a minister. They have offered a salary of \$1000. Nominally large, but really not better than \$600 in Walpole. I do not believe that I shall receive a call. I feel in my bones that I shall not suit them. I do not think that I should accept should they invite me. They want me to go to Boston, and raise up a new Society,—also New York City; but, I shall stay in Walpole if they make out \$500, let who will call.

"I see no place so pleasant, no people I like so well as Walpole, and my own congregation. . . . I am

anxious to get home, to kiss my wife and children, and sit down in peace.

“Tell Dolly I salute her with a brother’s love; remember me to Catherine, good girl; and tell the little boys to be wide awake and good, to love ma,—each other, Aunt Dolly, Catherine, and everybody. Je vous baise. Au revoir.

“Yours forever and longer,  
“O. A. Brownson.”

On the whole, the ministers with whom he conferred on this journey pleased him far beyond the Universalists whom he met in 1829. Channing he considered a great man,—the greatest in the Unitarian body, but not great enough to become head of his new foundation. Channing’s power was more of a persuasive order than of the logical and constructive type necessary to a pioneering project. Said Brownson:

“Perhaps the thought passed through my head that I was myself the destined man; but I did not entertain it. I could not be more than John the Baptist. . . . My business was not to found the new church, but to proclaim its necessity.”

Study occupied him constantly; and, by the next Autumn, “access to Boston and Cambridge libraries” became a temptation with a moving force. It pried Brownson out of Walpole for residence in Canton where he completed *Charles Elwood or the Infidel Converted*. This was an autobiographical volume tracing his return to religion after the lapse of 1829.

Nearness to Boston not only enlarged his opportunities and the sphere of his influence, but brought him within easy visiting distance of Channing. Nominally he became a Unitarian minister; but he preached such doctrines as he believed. He was stronger and more erudite than any about him, and he continued to study. With the aid of

only a French dictionary and without a teacher, he was reading the French philosophers in their own tongue, and writing quotations and opinions in notebooks. These he used later in reviews of their books.

There would seem to have met the Unitarian minister no challenge whatsoever as he took his place in the pulpit of the First Congregational Parish in Canton and preached his independent doctrine. This was in May, 1834. Brownson considered the event an omen of tolerance. He found the accepted doctrine to rest upon individual interpretation of the Bible. Each little congregation agreed with its pastor or dismissed him. There did not long continue discord between a minister and his flock. But Brownson found a deadly rivalry among the sects concerning the infallibility of their respective leaders. His own parish gathered faithfully to hear his discourses; but that was because they liked him, and they liked what he said. He thought them tolerant.

Encouraged by the broadmindedness in his congregation, Brownson tried here, as he had in Walpole, to make mutual understanding among the neighboring ministers. Through such a method he hoped to effect the unified Protestant doctrine that would form his church. The faithful deserved the truth; and truth was rendered absurd if, at one and the same time, it was preached in contradictory statements. Within a year, we find the restless agitator chairman of a committee of Unitarian ministers, from Boston and near about, with avowed purpose to discover a common method of diffusing Christian truth and uniting the sects. The preachers forming the group could not agree on either the essentials of doctrine or the method of presenting the Gospel. Brownson had previously discarded the plan of choosing Channing as a leader and head of his organization:

“He loomed up at a distance in my eyes as the

great man of the age; but a closer view, an intimate acquaintance with him, soon disabused me. . . . I hold, and shall always hold, his memory in grateful respect. But he was not the great man that many supposed him to be."

Neither were the leaders, with whom he now conversed, satisfying as his aids. Individually, they listened to his plans; and one or two of them attended appointments in the Brownson home. But nothing of a practical nature developed from these attempts at unity. Brownson, the chairman, inclined to dominate the conversations. The ministers found they could not retain their own creeds if their doctrines were not accepted by Brownson; for his logic demolished all tenets except his own. There was no belief that he had not held at one time or another. Because of certain specific contradictions within them he had left the creeds that these men held at present. The members dropped out of the committee and the chairman found himself alone.

This was a disconcerting experience; but it was not the first time that he had felt himself alone in the midst of his pursuit of something of general interest. Back in Royalton, a challenge had taken him out of loneliness, only to have the group avoid him after his success in their midst; in Balston Spa, he had been alone, before and after a brief wave of popularity; in Auburn, he was alone before and after the experience of the Working Man's Party. Like the landscape of Vermont, Brownson's life shows no level stretches of years. His influence shows rapid rising and steep decline. More than that, the marble within him held his purpose firm, and supported an evergreen optimism. Brownson was sorry that the committee did not convene. He would seek further.

Brownson's parish increased, and the attendance at services in neighboring churches fell off. Ministers who

had neglected invitations to meet at the Brownson home, decided separately and collectively, that the First Congregationalist pastor was not a man to be ignored. They had differing ideas as to eternal life, as to divorce, as to the position of Christ in Christianity, as to the relation of morals to worship; but they were of one mind concerning Brownson. He must be moved on if they would live. It was finally agreed that someone of their party visit him, and suggest his trying out his experiment in the nearby city of Boston. There he would have greater numbers to call from.

The idea was welcome to Brownson. In fact he had been thinking of that very thing. He would like to go to Boston. The more he toyed with the idea, the more convinced he became that he needed the city, and that the city needed him.

Thus it was that in 1836 a great comet came into the horizon of Boston's religious thought. It followed an uncharted path and attracted wide concern. Believing that common men had a contribution to make to human affairs and to human welfare, Brownson constituted himself a public agent for ideas that he knew to be those of a laborer. He arrested the attention of all classes. On the last Sunday in May the opening sermon in Boston was delivered. It was a discourse on *Wants of the Times*, given in Lyceum Hall, Hanover Street. This discourse set forth the purposes and opinions of the minister: his hope to unify worship in America by finding the common beliefs of all except Jews, Pagans, and Mohammedans:

"I held that the race lives by immediate communion with God, therefore inspired by Him, and hence, in its normal state, aspires to Him. . . . Man thus in his natural life even partakes of God, and this partaking of God, I called inspiration. I did not mean by this that the race is supernaturally inspired; I only

meant what the Scriptures say, that 'there is a spirit in men, and the inspiration of the Almighty giveth understanding'; or, in other words that man is intelligent, is a rational existence, only by virtue of the immediate presence of God, simultaneously by the creator, the object, and the light of his reason."

It was a great moment for the untutored lad from Stockbridge and Royalton, when he stood in Lyceum Hall in Boston, neighbored by superficial inadequacy and satisfied ignorance, to tell independent thinkers and the common people who gathered in, his basis for building a structure of reasoning, philosophical belief, kindly and tolerant. He was glowing with the fire of his message when he told his congregation that man is free to worship God; and that God is free to love His people, individually, as children, and to do all the good that His infinite love could prompt. He had but recently come to the decision:

"This threw a heavy burden from my shoulders, and in freeing God from His assumed bondage to nature, unshackled my own limbs, and made me feel that in God's freedom, I had a sure pledge of my own. . . . I was no longer chained, like Prometheus, . . . with my vulture passions devouring my heart; I was no longer fatherless, an orphan, left to the tender mercies of inexorable general laws, and my heart bounded with joy, and I leaped to embrace the neck of my Father, and to rest my head on His bosom. I shall never forget the ecstasy of that moment, when I first realized that God is free."

From one of Brownson's disciples it is learned that the audience grew in numbers and importance to be for the most part made up of

"thinkers rather than worshippers, persons with whom religion had run off into pure intellectuality.

But it was original thinking. There was more original thinking in that congregation than in all the rest of Boston put together; and that is saying not a little. The profound thinkers were there. . . . To a very acute observer it was evident that, consciously or unconsciously, he was aiming at Catholicity. It was also evident that his own difficulties were not settled; he was gradually settling them by his very preaching."

This was the opinion of Isaac Hecker, convert founder of the Paulist Congregation, who was at this time one of the idealistic boys who went up occasionally from New York to Boston to hear the man. Youths from everywhere gathered in. Brownson's enthusiasm, his sympathy, his frankness, his manly strength, appealed to the young hero-worshippers of his day. As he stood on the platform, six-feet, four inches tall, a specimen of perfect health, and talked on the heights that the human mind could reach and on the depth of the human soul, the young fellows in the benches were electrified. They named clubs after him; they wrote to him for advice; they invited him to lecture, and they filled halls for him; they subscribed to his magazine; they read his articles, and discussed them. They lived the better for having met his mind.

Brownson's chief aim at first was to save the laboring classes from unbelief and to call public attention to what he considered the necessity of a new religious organization of mankind. This organization must rest upon a philosophy more definite than that of the European idealists that he had investigated with much pains; it must have nothing of the American "Revival" about it; it should provoke thought and direct honest minds to the problems of the day through earnest exchange of ideas. He would appeal to the universal reason of numbers of men, to discover the eternal and immutable truth.

The attitude of Brownson was that of the earnest in-

vestigator seeking truth. If a man, not a watchmaker, finds the scattered parts of a watch, and he needs a time-piece, he will be hopeful that it can be unified: that it will work. If he is beyond the radius of any who knows more about clocks than he does, he may himself try to fit the parts together. Failing, he may accept, tentatively, the suggestion of others. But, if it will not finally go, if it will not point the hour, shall he, an adult, wear it anyway, and pretend satisfaction with a mere ornament?

To Brownson, religion was as important and as practical as that. If it could not "go"; if it could not justify its name and bind a man to God, he cast it from him and sought further for satisfaction. Because men recognized his earnestness of purpose, they followed him. The Lyceum Hall proved inadequate. Brownson next engaged the Masonic Temple of Boston so that there would be room for all of those to whom his principles were agreeable. They sought him out. Again from Hecker:

"He was showing from pure reason . . . that the Church is an organism which effectuates the unitive principles between God and man. . . . He was occupied in working out the problem philosophically and for the universe. I was looking out for number one. . . . But he once told me that he was like a general of an army born in rebellion, and his duty was to carry as many back with him to the true standard as he could. This delusion he soon got rid of, and went alone, at last."

These Masonic Temple meetings formed Brownson's first attempt to excite wide religious interest outside of a recognized religious body. The organization was called *The Society of Christian Union and Progress*. In the first meeting there, held in July, 1836, he advertised his purpose and his ideas; and he spread them abroad in *The Reformer*, of which he was editor.

Some attended his services through curiosity, many for the mental challenge which the speaker offered. Henry Brownson estimates that the attendance was five hundred souls gathered Sunday after Sunday to hear the discourses of his father through a period of seven years. Father Isaac Hecker, who first met Brownson during this period of his life, and whose home was in New York City, estimates that the "congregation was not averaging more than three hundred."

Brownson, himself, says of the venture:

"My society at one time was prosperous, but in general I could not pride myself on my success; yet I saw clearly enough that with more confidence in myself, a firmer grasp on my own convictions, a stronger attachment to my own opinions because they were mine, and a more dogmatic temper than I possessed, I might easily succeed, not in founding a New Catholic Church, indeed, but in founding a new sect, not without influence."

## CHAPTER VI

### The Society of Christian Union and Progress

WITH the profound purpose, then, of discovering and reuniting the scattered elements of Christ's teaching, Brownson proceeded to catch the attention of bewildered Americans and to direct their thought into definite channels. The organ of his Society was *The Boston Reformer*; and, lest readers confuse the aim of his magazine with that of his earlier reform publications, the editor declared the changes of principle that had been effected within him in six years:

"I had no confidence in religion, and concerned myself with it but to oppose it; now I embrace it as a lever of reform, as the very soul of progress. Then I regarded man as passive in the hands of eternal circumstances; I now recognize in him an active principle by which, to a certain extent, he may rise superior to circumstance. I then looked upon the outward for reform; I now, without undervaluing the outward, look mainly to the inward. Then, I was indignant at the past, and wished to destroy all memory of it; now . . . I would not, if I could, blot out the past. . . . I prize too highly what it has done, . . . All that I ask is that . . . we do not waste our energies in useless efforts to make it the present or the future.

"These are important changes of opinion, and in a logical mind must lead to results widely different from those I then contemplated. I was then truly a

revolutionist, in principle and in spirit. I am now much more of a conservative. The age of revolutions has passed by. We live in an epoch, at least in a country, of orderly, legalized progress. . . . Here the conservative and the radical should be combined in the same individual. The ruling idea of the conservative is order, that of the radical would break up all order, introduce confusion, and anarchy; the radical opposes the conservative, because he believes the conservative is opposed to all progress, and determined to perpetuate all existing abuses. Both may unite and be fellow-laborers for humanity, the very moment that the means of obtaining progress without interrupting order, and of preserving order without preventing progress, is discovered. This is the great problem which it seems to me our country has solved. In our republican constitution a provision for amendments is inserted. The voice of the people, quietly and constitutionally expressed, can make or unmake such laws as seemeth to the people meet and proper. There is, then, here no need for conservatives and radicals. Both terms should be abolished. They make enemies of those who would be friends. We want men, human beings, devoted to the good of humanity and nothing more.

“I am then, it may be seen, neither conservative nor radical, but a combination of both; and the *Reformer* will labor to unite the two parties, or rather to melt both into one great party of humanity. In this sense, I adopt the motto of the *Reformer*: ‘No party but mankind.’ ”

The first number of the new *Reformer* appeared in July, 1836, and the magazine ran for two years. It had been a political organ; but the new editor would have it neither partisan nor neutral. He would discuss first principles in

politics, as in morals and religion; but he insisted upon freedom to advocate or condemn any political measure that appeared.

To Sally Healy Brownson may be credited the more nearly calm patience that her husband was assuming. He was growing into the leadership for which he seemed destined. Her little family and her home kept the devoted Mrs. Brownson out of the public eye; but she was a perfect wife and mother, and a perfect hostess to the guests in their Chelsea residence. She mellowed the mood of Orestes, and sometimes induced him to modify the hasty phrase of his pen.

Brownson's appointment to a position at the Marine Hospital in Chelsea had come through the influence of George Bancroft. It was a reward for certain powerful essays written during the first presidential campaign of Martin Van Buren. Bancroft, staunch party man that he was, sincerely appreciated the political power of Brownson's style. They had worked together to bring about a Van Buren victory, and when Brownson temporarily severed his connection with the *Reformer* shortly after the election, he was missed. On resuming charge of the paper in the beginning of the summer following, 1837, he received a letter from Bancroft who was "glad to see [him] again in the field." He says further:

"I am very glad you have returned to the work, because you are (what so few are) rooted and grounded in the true doctrine. . . . It is the misfortune of many of our very estimable men that they have reflected but little; that they have not set their minds in order; . . . I think your writings give abundant evidence of that deep philosophy which . . . tries the merit of every public man. . . ."

It was to Democratic luck, in having the strong man with them, that Bancroft largely attributed the party's

triumph in 1836. Consequently, when Van Buren made him Collector of the Port of Boston, with power to appoint minor officers, he in turn named Brownson Steward in the United States Marine Hospital. It was a reward to an ally. According to the historian Beard, the spoils system had been "elevated to the dignity of a national principle during the age of Andrew Jackson."

But Brownson understood the appointment as a possible curb to his expression, and hesitated to accept the position. He had not aspired to the office, and he had no pledge to give. His son relates the experience:

"One of his [Brownson's] objections was that holding an office under the government would hamper his freedom of political discussion, which he was determined to maintain in all circumstances. Bancroft assured him that he was familiar with his political views and his manner of discussing political measures, and that there was no objection to the freedom he had always exercised in this direction; that in fact it was rather desirable than otherwise, and his independent manner of speaking gave additional weight when he supported government measures, as in most instances he did. He held the office for four years, and was removed when the Whigs came into power with General Harrison in 1841."

Henry does not say that Brownson was a man without a party when his stewardship was done, which is the literal truth. The Whigs should have rewarded Brownson in 1840 for taking Bancroft at his word. That will make a chapter of its own. Meanwhile the minister continued his work of religious zeal.

Brownson's first attack in the Society was against negation. Caught in the state of transition from Naturalism to Supernaturalism by the philosophy of Cousin, he had

adopted the French eclectic principle that the best of every belief might be united in one philosophy, if one chose from among the positive elements. He saw that religion must be a decisive force based upon firm faith; and that Protestantism had too long relied upon unity through protest. Protest had lost its strength. Oneness of purpose could no longer result from a common enmity against Catholicism; for most New Englanders looked upon the old Church as dead, or near it, and unworthy of their hatred. Brownson said:

“The work of destruction, commenced by the Reformation, which had introduced an era of criticism and revolution, had, I thought, been carried far enough. All that was dissoluble had been dissolved. All that was destructible had been destroyed, and it was time to begin the work of reconstruction—a work of reconciliation and love.

“Irreligious ideas and sentiments are disorganizing and destructive in their nature, and cannot be safely cherished for a single moment after the work of destruction is completed. When the work to be done is that of construction, of building up, of organizing, of founding something, we must resort to religious ideas and sentiments; for they, having love for their principle, are plastic, organic, constructive, and the only ideas and sentiments that are so. They are necessary to the new organization . . . ; what I called the church is necessary to the progress of man and society. . . .

“The first thing to be done is to cease our hostility to the past, discontinue the work of destruction; abandon the old war against papacy, which has no longer any significance, and in the spirit of universal love and conciliation, turn our attention to the work of founding a religious institution, or effecting a new

church organization, adapted to our present and future wants. . . .

“Society as it is, is a lie, a sham, a charnel-house, a valley of dry bones. O that the Spirit of God would once more pass by, and say to these dry bones, ‘Live!’ So I felt, so others felt; . . . the leading Unitarian ministers in Boston and its vicinity from 1830 to 1840 . . . were demanding in their interior souls a religious institution . . . in which they could find shelter . . . and some crumbs of the bread of life. . . . Not only in Boston was this cry heard. It came to us on every wind from all quarters—from France, from Germany, from England even; and Carlyle in his *Sartor Resartus*, seemed to lay his finger on the plague-spot of the age. Men had reached the center of indifference; under a broiling sun in the Rue d’Enfer, had pronounced the everlasting ‘No’. Were they never to be able to pronounce the everlasting ‘Yes’?

“Among them all I was probably the most hopeful, and the most disposed to act. If I lacked faith in God, I had faith in humanity. The criticisms on all subjects sacred and profane, . . . had, I thought, sufficiently developed ideas and sentiments, and obtained for us all the light needed, all the materials wanted for commencing the work of reorganizing . . . The Church of the Future.

“. . . Not finding among my friends and acquaintances the ‘representative man’ and waiting till he should reveal himself, I concluded to commence a direct preparation for his coming. . . . I was invited to Boston to preach to the laboring classes, and to do what I could to save them from the unbelief which had become quite prevalent among them. I accepted the invitation, proposing to myself to make of it an opportunity to bring out my new religious and so-

cialistic theories, and to call public attention to the necessity of a new religious organization of mankind. I accordingly organized, on the first Sunday in July, 1836, 'The Society for Christian Union and Progress.'

"The name I gave to the Society was indicative of the principle of the future organization, and of the end contemplated—the union and progress of the race. I remained, with some interruption, the minister of this society till the latter part of 1843, when I began to suspect that man is an indifferent church-builder, and that God Himself had already founded a church for us, some centuries ago, quite adequate to our wants, and adapted to our nature and destiny.

"My Society at one time was prosperous; but, in general, I could not pride myself on my success; . . . But a new sect was not in my plan, and I took pains to prevent my movement from growing into one. What I wanted was not sectarianism, of which, I felt we had had quite too much, but unity, and catholicity. I wished to unite men, not to divide them,—to put an end to divisions, not to multiply them. . . .

"Whether I preached or wrote, I aimed simply at exciting thought and directing it to the problems to be solved; not to satisfy the mind, or to furnish it with dogmatic solutions for its difficulties. I was often rash in my statements, because I regarded myself not as putting forth doctrine that must be believed, but as throwing out provocations to thought and investigation. My confidence was not in the individual mind, whether my own or another's, but in humanity, in the actions and decisions of the general mind, the universal reason."

The work of search, discovery, and dissemination of knowledge, absorbed Brownson's days utterly. His opening sermon before the formal organization of The Society

of Christian Union and Progress, *Wants of the Times*, was preached in Lyceum Hall on the last Sunday in May 1836. Curiosity filled the persons who gathered for the service advertised. Brownson was in plain view on the platform before any of them arrived; and, while he was busy, he was conscious of an assembling congregation large enough to fill the hall.

They observed the tall, lean, muscular man on the stage marking, with strips of paper, pages in Leroux, Kant, Cousin, and others; arranging in systematic order on his table, letters of inquiry that had reached him by mail; and checking passages of Scripture chosen for the day's discourse. A few friends moved to the front of the hall and awaited his leisure. Brownson greeted them, and spoke familiarly with their small group until time for the public prayer and sermon.

The same title served for the series of discussions delivered Sunday after Sunday for eight years. Brownson attacked the vital problems again and again with the vehemence of a lawyer pleading a case for life or death: What exactly does Christ require of Christians? What must a man believe *and do* in order to gain the Heaven of Christ's promise? Where is the case of the poor in the Christian program? How may the wants of the times be satisfied?

Brownson emphasized different phases of morality, according as the letters of the week indicated trends of interest; but always, the focus of his thought was upon the individual with relation to God and to his neighbor. Men, who had been befogged in vague surmise as to the meaning and force of the Commandments, remained with him. He presented the status of religion in America at the time, and the reasons for its weakness. He had failed to unify pulpits within the same sect. Now, seeking no approval of council or committee, Brownson's determina-

tion was spurred to find the bare rudiments of truth by open discussion with many lay minds.

To this end he put claims before his audience and submitted inquiries for their consideration. He peered through small glasses and held his references close to his face while reading them aloud; but no word of his message was muffled. Both his voice and his statements were clear. Quotations from Scripture rolled from his memory, and he so stressed the key-word of a phrase as to leave no doubt of its significance as cited. Every inch of the man was alive. His unruly hair was repeatedly smoothed back by a characteristic gesture. The long fingers of one hand and then the other threw it from his agitated face as he paused to let the conclusion of each step rest in the minds of his auditors.

The thoughtful poor found their way to Lyceum Hall. Brownson saw them and was glad; for it was his hope that, beyond their present benefit, they might be amalgamated into a unit whose voice might speak in high places. Their notions of the Deity varied widely; but they listened to Brownson as to a prophet, for he seemed as one who would remove from their path all obstacles to progress.

But Brownson had not felt himself bound to adhere to any of his transient thoughts or expressions further than they coincided with his advancing convictions. His purposes fitted in well with the general conception of progress accepted by leaders of the Lyceum Movement. Its plans were included under four headings. They would effect adult education, stimulate interest in general educational matters, train teachers, and establish museums and libraries.

Only the first two of those motives paralleled Brownson's program; but the organizers invited him again and again to give lyceum lectures. To every invitation Brownson responded gladly. He found no difficulty in speaking, and

was only too happy to find eager audiences. He welcomed too the financial income which they afforded.

His household now included four sons, and Brownson would have "my dear wife and precious little boys want for nothing." There was hardly a small town in New England or a large one in the Atlantic States where Brownson did not lecture during the first and second year of his Society for Christian Union and Progress. The Heckers, who had heard him in Boston, filled a New York hall for him more than once.

Frothingham describes Brownson at this time as, "a powerful writer and lecturer. His voice was of great compass and power; he was possessed of a striking stature and physique; he was the fad of the hour." Reporters doubled down to their tablets and attempted to take down as much of each lecture as possible. Besides his words, they tried to present the unusual man to their readers. The force of his gestures enlivened his diction; his zeal gave flame to the inflection of his phrases. Discouraged men lifted their heads in pride, inwardly reproached themselves for their past failures, and believed that success was within their power.

By nature Brownson was a giver, a teacher, an impatient regulator of affairs. Hearing him was an experience. He was an unmistakable product of New England addressing New Englanders. And, what was more, his power was at his highest, because a son of poverty was speaking to the poor about their worth to themselves and to the nation if they would only rouse themselves to mental alertness.

The Society of Christian Union and Progress welcomed all Christians. It even made place for infidels. One might almost say that infidels were more welcome than others. For Brownson's disregard for the beliefs and attitudes in the usual sect, made him sympathetic with any who de-

nied relation with them all. He refused membership only to Jews, Pagans, and Mohammedans.

Harriet Martineau (esteemed by Mrs. Harry Fawcett as "one of the most distinguished literary women this [the nineteenth] century has produced"), was present at the first discourse of the Series. She was preparing a work on *Society in America*; and she included *Wants of the Times* almost entire, as a foundation for her further comment. Brownson announced his two great ends of free inquiry: discovery of God's plan for mankind, and amelioration of the condition of the poorest. Further he expressed the hope that the answers to the two problems would bring about a purer standard of morality than the churches had contended for.

In other matters, as time went on, he might shift his purpose, somewhat; in matters of dogma, he was certain to change ground from his present beliefs. But the poor, and the searchers for truth, would find him a brother whose strength belonged to his fellowmen. These definite alliances, one with the doubtful and one with the poor as a single class, focused two rays of prejudice upon Brownson. The regular church-members, and the high economic strata of society, known as "the recognized circles," looked upon him with prejudice. Besides, he could not in conscience approve of everything that certain radicals in his flock desired. Thus, he placed himself, immediately, between two stones of a mill. Furthermore, proprietors were antagonized by Brownson's pledge to support the trade unionists; and workers were infuriated by his inability to raise their salary. To some extent, he lost from both sides.

But he gained more than he lost; and some of those who left him early, returned on second consideration. They craved what he could give them now, regardless of what he could effect for their causes at a later time. Thus the other churches were attended less and less; not because

the sermons of Brownson's neighbors were above the general comprehension, but because the standards that ministers held before their congregations were not as lofty as those advocated by Brownson. He preached one hundred per cent sincerity toward God and man. Meanwhile, he lived the democratic side of Christianity. He went out to meet the poor and to talk over their problems with them. He needed no special study to grasp their point of view. He reached them without condescension.

Brownson saw no consistency in the practice of a casual Christianity. With Heaven and Hell in the contest, Brownson believed that whole communities with faith renewed could be brought to live the Sermon on the Mount. He declared that, but for doubt in the minds of men, the attainment of such ambition would be a simple accomplishment. Furthermore he blamed the doubt of laymen upon a "fatal scepticism" that pervaded the pulpits. The response was immediate. His brother-ministers were indignant at his pronouncement, and alleged that they had been called infidels.

Many of the clergy also resented Brownson's departure from the usual manner and matter of the pulpit. They were piqued at his open discussions concerning the lack of definite precept within the sects, concerning causes for a layman's justified dissatisfaction. They took umbrage at his toying with such questions as whether or not the church places fetters upon the mind; whether its ceremonies were too formal to be vital; whether the church's indifference to progress might be resultant upon lethargy among leaders.

But if the affronted clergy were not pleased, many types of reformers were delighted. Abolitionists gathered in; moral reformers; social reformers armed against "privilege." Political reformers, and anti-formalists, packed Boston's Lyceum Hall, and as we have seen, made neces-

sary a larger meeting-place at the Masonic Temple for the Society.

Certain conservatives expressed content in the fact that all the restless souls in the city had found one place to work, and think, and talk. It was a blessed riddance, they thought, to have the disorganizers, agitators, and infidels out of the various parishes. It was a satisfaction to see them attending some place of worship. Still, there was cause for concern. If their chief wished to do mischief, he had a great power, in that group, awaiting his direction. The leader was to be feared and watched. Those who focused suspicion on Brownson's Masonic Temple meetings, were next impelled to prove the justice of their ill thought. In self-defense they kept the man under microscopic observation. Meanwhile, the less said about the young Daniel the better. Attacks upon him were futile. His defense, though preposterous, was always unanswerable.

In 1838, the organ for the Society became *The Boston Quarterly Review*. As its name signifies, its editor had taken a step in the direction of dignity and conservatism. As was becoming to one groping his way, Brownson's tone became more modulated. Of *The Boston Quarterly*, its editor says:

"When I commenced that *Review* my views were still . . . in the process of formation, rather than formed; and I aimed at exciting inquiry, rather than at positive instruction. The greater part of my essays were conceived and written with the view of promoting liberal inquiry and philosophical investigation; not with a view of teaching any regular system of doctrine, or any subject whatever. My great and leading design was, to awaken the public mind, and to prepare it for the reception of profounder and more kindling views of the *Destiny of Man and Society*, than those I found generally embraced by my

countrymen. The community appeared to be asleep, overcome by a mental *vis inertiae*; and the first thing they needed was to be aroused, by bold and startling appeals, to a sense of their danger, and stimulated to new and more vigorous efforts for their salvation, moral, intellectual, and social."

Then Brownson tried to establish relationships among apparently isolated ideas. Finally, he arranged related statements into syllogisms, and attempted to trace out religious truth through the step-by-step process of testing and fitting together; of discarding, and testing anew.

The personal hunger of earnest, kindred souls in the multitude drew them to the leader who labored for and with them to know actualities beyond death. Brownson was not among strangers. Many of the Boston people had met him through his essays in the various magazines with which he was affiliated: *The Christian Register*, *The Unitarian*, *The Christian Examiner*, and others. James Walker, later chosen President of Harvard, had repeatedly complimented Brownson upon his essays.

All Brownson's religious papers had a constructive purpose, and they were logical in their development. The premises might be wrong (and often they were), but from them the reasoning was developed syllogistically. He was aiming at certitude in truth. To the *Philanthropist* he contributed an essay criticising the methods of leaders who: "have failed to meet the difficulties of the case, and . . . have taken for granted the very points they should have proved. . . .

"My own experience must count for something to myself. Theology has been to me something more than a speculation. . . . At some future day, I hope to give in full the consideration which produced my own conversion from scepticism."

Challenged for the fact that his magazines gave too

much space to religion, Brownson admitted that there was a moral tone to all his articles. Furthermore, he gave his reason for carrying none of the scandals of the town: "Other papers are doing that task well." It was his wish to conduct a magazine that a judicious parent might put into the hands of the growing youth of his home.

Particularly in the *Boston Quarterly*, it is evident that the editor is aiming in a definite direction of analysis and research. It gained and held its readers among the profound. They felt that it filled a need. The age was one of unrest, of challenge. Duels were fought in print as well as on the field. Fearlessly, Brownson offered solutions to old problems, calmly admonishing men and methods. He and his readers were investigators together. Subscribers liked that. Dyed-in-the-wool Presbyterians did not. Brownson, later, said of it:

"Never had a periodical a better list of subscribers than had the *Boston Quarterly Review* during the whole term of its existence. They were few, but they were serious, honest, earnest, affectionate. . . . When a clamor was raised against me, which fetched its echoes from one end of the Union to the other, not one of them to my knowledge deserted me."

Some of the subjects, for which the bold champion contended, were justice for the black slave, and for the white toiler in field and shop. Before other economists had voiced the sentiment, he advocated the "living wage"—a wage permitting the laborer to have more than the bare necessities of bread and shelter. "Christian law is the only key to the problem of human labor." He lashed theorists who blindly settled complex problems by custom, without specific study of their elements. No name was too sacred for inclusion amongst those brought out for public notice:

"Mr. Jefferson, like the philosophers of his time, made no account of the genius of his people, but

looked upon them as wax, which takes readily any impression that it is thought best to give it. He overrated the powers of government in the formation of national character, and believed it quite possible to form the American people. . . . But the statesman must take as his point of departure the social system he finds existing, whatever its merit compared with other states; for the life of every people is indissolubly connected with their social system. Destroy that, and you destroy them. You may develop, modify, improve it; but you must always preserve its essential character, and proceed according to essential principles."

Brownson echoed the longing of his age for the beautiful, the true, and the good. He declared that beauty, "is as real as God, Himself, and as objective as the ideal formula." He promoted interest in matters of education, interest in progress, interest in invention, declaring its legitimate place in high civilization. But he continued a searching concern in all that pertained directly to religion. He thus satisfied the appetites natural to American readers.

The eighteenth century had been called the century of reason. The principle of empiricism had been deeply rooted in many minds recently from England. The American Revolution, and its overthrow of royal power, the establishment of a stable government in a new land, had not the full and unqualified support of every person on the American side of the Atlantic. Minds still questioned the republic. Echoes of Godwin's preachments, directly anarchistic, still sounded. They disturbed the equilibrium of the established order; and, strange as it may seem, men who had become unsettled in their political convictions, looked to the reputedly unstable Brownson to balance their reason—to lend them assurance through his mode of logical conclusion.

The nineteenth century was actively interested in political matters. In the twentieth century, only students busy

themselves with essays on the English Constitution, and with treatises comparing its value with that of the American Constitution. The twentieth-century man of the world assumes the attitude that both the governments are going along well enough to satisfy him; and that, if there is anything wrong with them, some specialist, paid with the citizen's taxes, will find a way to adjust the difficulty.

Such was not the general attitude in the early nineteenth century. The man on the street talked about Bentham's philosophy, "the greatest happiness of the greatest number," now an accepted axiom of government. It had been sponsored by Ricardo, in England. Disraeli was standing behind it, in Brownson's time, in the English Parliament.

Americans read discussions of these complex problems; and they looked hopefully to Brownson, the greatest American mind, for aid in forming their opinions. Utilitarian rationalism had formed an atmosphere favorable to the examination of causes; and such examination was Brownson's joy. Carlyle had spoken of utilitarianism as "profit-and-loss philosophy." His writings were introduced again and again to the Brownson readers interested in political economy and impressed with the seriousness of life.

The trend of Brownson's influence was always toward truth. Not fact, so much as the truth behind events, was of interest to him and his followers. Such investigation absorbed him; and he was unconscious of throwing away the material shell of occurrences, in presenting the more worthy matter of its source. He attacked problems by the question: Whence came the impulse behind the happening, and in what direction is the course of action moving? Thus only, Brownson claims, were the worthy portions of current history discovered. He would offer his public nothing less.

He sifted so many doctrines during his quest for a church that most of the current philosophies were at his

finger tips for the rest of his life. In a controversy in 1875, a year before the old warrior's death, he wrote a reply to the *History of Conflict between Religion and Science*, by John William Draper, M.D., LL.D., a professor in the University of New York. In that response, Brownson referred to the years 1836-1843.

"Well, gentlemen, what truth of science do you allege the Church prohibits, opposes, or contradicts in her teaching? . . . Can you name one? Suffer us to tell you that you cannot. We take no pride in the fact, but we belonged to your party . . . and we find, in reading your works, nothing, no thought, no theory, no hypothesis, or conjecture, even, bearing on the conflict you speak of that we were not familiar with before any of you were heard of . . .

"You are, none of you, original thinkers; you are notorious plagiarists. Our youth was fed from the literature from which you pilfer . . . which had become an old story with us long before you reproduced them."

Brownson never wrote more vigorously than in the *Boston Quarterly*; and his eloquence during the period of his Society of Christian Union and Progress was as great as at any time in his life. Opinions on his oratory always varied. One critic speaks of him as, "an orator of very high order." Another considers him "not an orator." Father Hecker perhaps touches the cause of the varied estimates: "He could control any reasonable mood . . . but to stir emotion was not in his power." It seems not to have been Brownson's aim to whip the emotions into action. He had seen it overdone to no good purpose. Brownson deliberately addressed the intellect.

George Leach knew Orestes personally at this time. He was one of the ministers in the neighboring Brook Farm colony while Brownson's Society of Christian Union and

Progress was at its highest influence. He was carried away in admiration of Brownson's power to convince his hearers. He said, "We have probably not his equal in the country." This must have been the general opinion of the day for there are, among his unpublished letters, scores of invitations to address groups in St. Louis, Cincinnati, Cleveland, Detroit, Chicago, The University of Notre Dame, Baltimore, Washington, Philadelphia, towns and cities throughout the New England States, Montreal and Quebec. The dates range from 1830 to 1865. Lyceum Societies and Mercantile Associations arranged most of the lectures up to 1844.

On November 30, 1842, Cuthbert Gordon, who is evidently secretary for the Mercantile Library Association of New York, is

"happy to inform you that you will find a large and attentive audience, about 1500 in number, and that many friends are looking forward with expectation of great pleasure from the privilege of listening to you."

Although Brownson was in no sense a stickler for fees, the offerings presented him were usually double that given to other speakers. Many times they were \$100 and expenses; sometimes they were a guaranty of expenses and such sale of tickets as the parish or club could make. Gilbert V. Seldes, in *The Stammering Century*, pronounces the regular fee for a lecturer in New England in the early and mid-century to be from \$40 to \$50. Some parishes asked that Brownson give lectures toward the payment of their debts. Societies of young men requested the privilege of naming clubs after him. Daniel Ross of New York wrote with a great flourish of penmanship to solicit the autograph of Brownson.

Brownson satisfied his hearers, but he moved too rapidly for those who attempted to follow him consistently.

His *New Views*, designed to set forth reasons for establishing the new church, were not consistent with certain articles in the *Boston Quarterly*. Brownson had launched forth at his own speed, leaping mountains and rivers. But he paid heed to correspondence indicating that adherents were wavering. He felt responsible to his public.

Thus, to effect the more careful instruction of such persons as needed preliminary work, Brownson began the serial, *Charles Elwood: or the Infidel Converted*. This work had just enough fiction to hold the ordinary reader, but was chiefly a work of philosophy and religion. In it were presented questions that had come to him in the mail. Some of them were from cynics, but most of them were written out of earnest troubled minds. Brownson answered the notes personally; but he also gave their matter space in *Charles Elwood*, whenever it seemed especially pertinent. The range of the work covered divine revelation, miracles, faith, Scripture, and the church. The questions were presented by Elwood and answered by the Reverend Mr. Smith who was, of course, Brownson.

Not only in his writings, but in conversation and informal table talk, Brownson always had an opinion and an answer. All his conversations turned into monologues. Brownson formed the habit of instruction to such an extent that he annoyed other men of opinion. Hedge, for instance, liked to express his ideas, and he made a restless listener. Once he wrote a friend: "Brownson became unbearable this evening. I shall not sit with him again."

On one occasion a plot was formed to capture the field of conversation for a period. A group of five decided upon a subject and divided its parts carefully. The members were pledged to fill every crevice of the dialogue; and, thus, to force Brownson to become a listener. In groping for a topic, the men avoided everything philosophical and religious. Determined to find a subject wherein Brownson would gain instruction, they chose *Greenland*.

The game meant work for every participant. To one was assigned the history of Greenland; to another, its products; its actual location and scenery; its climate; and its inhabitants.

The men were as hilarious as boys in their preparation. They rehearsed parts of it, for they were determined that Orestes A. would not wedge in. But when the contest was actually staged, only two men spoke their Greenland. The third entertainer was stopped on his second sentence, and the actors were so disconcerted that they never recovered form. Brownson held the floor for the rest of the evening and made no erroneous statement. None dared to meet the eye of another. Each secretly wondered if the man *did* know all of everything. They were comforted on receiving the next *Quarterly*, to see a review of a book on Greenland. That explained it somewhat.

## CHAPTER VII

### The Boston Movement

BUT, besides the evanescent conversations on Greenland, on politics, on Cousin and Kant, there was much in Brownson's output that was of permanent worth. It was necessary to the speaker who would make himself clear to the Masonic Temple audience, that his diction leave no room for misunderstanding. Every level of education was represented. Teachers and professional men were present; laborers, who could not read, were there; youth, impatient with "duty-harangues" on Sunday afternoons, attended and brought their sweethearts with them. That was a varied audience. It took something like genius to make any message clear to all of them at once.

It is true that Brownson established no distinct trend of philosophy that is easily traceable in the religious thought of the time between 1830 and 1838. His aim steadily pointed toward truth; but his path zigzagged and circled as he caught a glimpse of the divine in many places, and could trace none of them to divinity itself.

But in the process of careful and continuous reasoning, and in the careful expression of conclusions, literature was being created. The theory that literature is a by-product of research was expressed by Brownson in *The Scholar's Mission*:

"The youth that go forth from our colleges and universities mourn over the meagreness of our national literature, and glowing with their young fire and patriotic zeal, start up, and with noble resolution

exclaim, 'Go to now, let us create a national literature.' . . .

"However desirable it may be to have a rich and varied, a profound and living national literature, it can never be attained by being sought as an end. . . . It comes, if it comes at all, only on condition that brave and truehearted men engage in some great and good work for their country or their race, to the performance of which literature is indispensable; and it will be true and noble, rich and varied, living and profound, just in proportion to the nobleness of the work, and the zeal, purity, and ability with which they have labored for its performance."

In looking about New England in the 1830's there seems to be no greater provoker of literary expression than Brownson in his Working Man's Party and in his Society. Is it possible that the impact of his discussions gave origin to the Boston Literary Movement? The thought offers a challenge worthy of investigation; for thus far an unsatisfying dimness still shrouds the literary lights that contributed to make a brilliant page of letters, following the year 1830. The Concord group seems incomplete. The body needs a head. Members within it are Hawthorne, Ripley, Longfellow, Whittier, Thoreau, Parker, Bancroft, and Emerson. Their activities constituted the Boston Movement.

That much is told in literary histories; but these men are of almost equal stature. There is no inspirational mind among them, to whom any one of their number credits his own attainment. This present scientific age is, paradoxically enough, accepting, without challenge, the statement or implication that, without specific impulse, without generation, there arose in Boston, a century ago, a group of notable men. These authors had no literary forefathers and are without very remarkable literary heirs.

On the face of it, the evidence points to a possible leader who died, actually or by reputation, after he had given zest to the movement and before his name had won a permanent place in connection with it. Had the man actually died, however, his name would have lived and accumulated about it myths varying in degrees of veracity. That supposition must be discarded.

A second guess might assume that the author lived on and made enemies of influential men. If the founder's popularity and power were killed before his actual death, if he died in obscurity, it is possible that men who killed his name would later toss it into the casket with his body, hoping that it would not rise again. Since such a leader must have existed to give tone and power to his age, something unusual must have occurred to leave blank pages where the story of his fame should be.

A leading mind, then, existed. There could indeed have been a central idea about which the Concord members felt a common interest; but does an age of science accept, as a fact, the suggestion that ideas floated into Boston on a current of air? Was there no physical expression of a creative mind greater than any of those included in the Boston group? Though they were Transcendentalists, a modern intellect need not accept too literally Emerson's idea of an over-soul. Surely someone at least focused the common thought upon the idea. The regulating principle came, not alone from somewhere but from some person—from an outstanding mentality that may be judged the nucleus of the group.

A one-hundred-year perspective is long enough to furnish a workable scale. By 1941, one might suppose that the lesser men would have faded into a suitable setting for the central figure. But no; there is still revealed, in the latest editions of biographical literature in America, this same small line of equally-measuremented men: Longfellow, Thoreau, Hawthorne, Whittier, Parker, Emer-

son, Bancroft, and Ripley. In individual texts they may range in different order; but their circle grows neither larger nor smaller. Yet, they are not many-sided men. They are all of a philosophical turn. This made a social experimenter of one, a recluse of another, drew Thoreau into the woods and alone with nature, made Longfellow an apostle of beauty and Indian lore, made Whittier a humanitarian. No one among them seems forceful enough to have awakened the others in the group; yet we can not admit it to be an accident that a single period produced them.

The problem has attracted the attention of James Truslow Adams:

“A group of intellectuals, headed by Irving and Cooper, had appeared in New York, and now a much more important one including Emerson, Hawthorne, Whittier, Longfellow, Thoreau, and others, appeared in the neighborhood of Boston. This has been called the flowering of the Puritanic spirit, and various other things which mean nothing. It is easy to bemuse ourselves with words, but the plain fact is that we do not know why, out of the three centuries of Boston history, there should have been a few decades during which an unusual literary group appeared all at once and never before or after. . . . Among a small group in Boston, however, Unitarianism had served as a rationalizing bridge between the dread Jehovah and a somewhat vague Power for Good at the center of things.”

With this hint pointing a conclusion, there may be found something further toward the exact end of our search, in an inquiring body assembled frequently in a rented home-and-store of the Peabody family, at 19 West Street, Boston. *Blackwood's Magazine*, and the *Edinburgh Review* were sold there. Mrs. Peabody did some transla-

tions from the German; and we learn from *The Flowering of New England*, by Van Wyck Brooks, that:

“. . . they sold the German and French reviews and the writings of the continental authors whose thoughts were in the air. Miss Peabody, with her multifarious interests, chiefly in the ‘gardening’ of children, who, she felt, should be ‘artists from the beginning,’ was publishing juvenile books on her own account, among them the three volumes of *Grandfather’s Chair*, which Hawthorne contrived to write in the intervals of measuring coal at the custom-house. There Margaret Fuller was giving her *Conversations*; and there, on occasion, Jones Very read his sonnets aloud to a chosen few. Eager school-girls flocked into the shop and bought more pencils than they could use for a chance to see Miss Peabody or Miss Fuller. And there . . . one saw some of the illuminati, Emerson, Alcott, Frederick Hedge, who had studied in Germany with Bancroft . . . Dwight or George Ripley. Hawthorne came often to see Sophia.”

Here are found, indeed, most of the group known in the Boston Movement. The Peabody home was alive to culture; it drew cultured persons to itself, but it seems more an applauding gallery than a creative center. One senses one of the lovely common-garden-variety reading circles in the social-commercial Peabody home. The place was, mentally, a step above the other stores in the block. Chatting, singing, dancing, reading poetry, and discussing essays were delightful. It was in the overflow area of the fountain spring. It was near it; but we must not be satisfied that we have found the source.

We may examine the findings at another gathering spot in Boston. It is in the Masonic Temple. The group here is not from three to seven individuals; but from three

hundred to four hundred of the most profound minds in New England. They are meeting each week for seven years, between 1836-1844, to hear such questions as might be offered by a certain Unitarian minister named Brownson to the members of his Society of Christian Union and Progress while he was editing first *The Reformer* and later *The Boston Quarterly Review*.

Men hung upon the words of the minister and lecturer, because of his earnestness and love of truth. He was the most convincing of speakers. Hecker says of him that even in private conversations:

“He would push his thought before your attention and never be content until he had you full of his idea. He would do this without bullying, and yet would encroach upon your independence if you were not careful to maintain it.”

That was the secret of Brownson’s power; he was eaten up with zeal. His home was a center for the meeting of cultured and thoughtful men and women who knew that he left his mark upon their lives and upon all whom he touched. In Sanborn’s *Henry D. Thoreau*, we learn that the naturalist, later to be recognized as a writer of the “Concord School,” made his home with Brownson for a period while he was studying. That was in 1835. He also taught the Brownson boys before they moved from Canton. Referring to one of these visits, Thoreau wrote in December, 1837:

“I have never ceased to look back with interest, not to say satisfaction, upon the short six weeks which I passed with you. They were a new era in my life —a new Lebenstag.”

A. Bronson Alcott’s “Conversation” on the *Transcendental Club and the Dial*, as quoted in the magazine, *American Literature*, gives some interesting items on the

members of the Transcendental Club. Alcott tells of a meeting held at his own house on October 3, 1836, at three o'clock:

"They met here; and—to show you how they wished to address the times and each other—the subject of discussion was this: *American Genius—the causes which hinder its growth giving us no first rate productions*. There were present at this meeting: Emerson, Hedge, Francis, Ripley, Orestes A. Brownson, Clarke, Bartol, and the host. Few of these persons had printed at that time as much, perhaps, as a sermon. . . . Mr. Emerson's first book, called *Nature*, was just published. It was a very thin volume. . . . He had a few lectures before that, by way of trying—one on Chaucer, one on Shakespeare, one on Bacon—a few lectures in a former season. . . . Margaret Fuller came to Boston in December of that same year, for the first time to live. . . . Mr. Brownson, too, had come to Boston, and was lecturing . . . every Sunday in the Masonic Temple. They were very well attended. He published also, his first book, entitled *New Views*—about as thick as *Nature*."

Although Brownson was not a graduate of Boston Latin School, as was Emerson, he was recognized as a lecturer before Emerson's speeches were widely known; and his contemporaries looked upon him as a writer of equal merit. Alcott refers only to the size of the volume, "about as thick as *Nature*." Gohdes thinks there is a reference to Brownson in Alcott's comment on an individual, among the group, who stimulated thought through argumentation:

"It was said of one member, I recollect, that he had the faculty of stating both sides. If he began with *Yes*, he would be sure to end with *Nay*; and if with *Nay*, he would end with *Yes*. One was as good

as the other; it made no difference—such was the faculty of the logical element."

Brownson's open-mindedness, and willingness to face any conclusion which logic discovered, was recognized by the Transcendentalists as well as by political leaders of a later date. As time went on, the members of the Club scattered, and met only at vacation times, and usually at the various homes of the members. Quoting Bronson Alcott again:

" . . . but it was arranged that during the season of recreation when these persons came to the city, the meetings should be quite often. They were held at Watertown, at Newton, Concord, Milton, Chelsea, (where Brownson was then living), frequently in Boston, and perhaps elsewhere."

George Bancroft invited Brownson to his home:

"If you come up the Connecticut River pray let us see you . . . you would like my friends . . . and others who have the true instinct about them."

Besides Brownson's local influence, his correspondence was extensive. There are literally thousands of unpublished letters in the Library of the University of Notre Dame. There are letters from political leaders like R. B. Rhett and Calhoun; from religious leaders like the Channings and Theodore Parker; from Transcendentalists like Emerson, Ripley, and Alcott; from coming great men like the Heckers. The most important personages of this day were attracted by the strength of Brownson's thought.

Isaac Hecker was a frail boy when first brought to the attention of Brownson, by Mrs. Hecker. The woman was much worried about her son's health. She would like to put him under Brownson's spiritual direction. And Brownson took him on, and kept him under advice long after the grown man had become a Catholic, and indeed a

priest. Brownson had his word in the founding of the great Paulist Community of missionaries, when Father Hecker went to him for counsel.

Some of the Hecker letters are written by the boy, in childish hand, to "Friend Brownson," asking advice in the choice of doctors; others are letters of appreciation from older members of the Hecker family. William C. Freeman, a law student from New York, age twenty-one, wrote a stiff and formal letter: "for the purpose of asking your opinion and advice on a subject which from your experience I consider you to be every way capable of giving, and from your benevolence, (if I may be allowed to judge you by your writings), will be willingly bestowed."

At length, the point of the letter is reached. Freeman contemplates studying for the ministry instead of becoming a lawyer. He is troubled over the decision. Would Brownson please settle his difficulty? Unfortunately, Brownson's reply does not appear.

Alcott's comment upon *New Views* was made nearly four years before the first *Dial* was published. The initial number of that magazine is dated July 1840. In that number appears Ripley's essay, *Brownson's Writings Reviewed*.

The Brook Farm, George Ripley's project toward a common life, in the world but not of it, was credited by its founder to Brownson. In a letter dated December 18, 1842, Ripley thanks his friend for giving him the sub-structure of his dream.

"We [Brownson and Ripley], have truly sympathized as few men have done; you have always quickened my love for humanity and for no small share of what mental clearness I may have, am I indebted to the hours of genial, pleasant intercourse I have enjoyed with you. If I had never known you,

I should never have engaged in this enterprise. I consider it the incarnation of those transcendental truths which we have held in common, and which you have done much to make me love. To perceive the truth of man as man, to see through the hollowness and injustice of our social conventionalities, and to resolve on the reform of my own household, were with me almost simultaneous acts. This resolve attracted kindred spirits, and here we are."

The fact that Brownson was an influence in the life of Ripley is further corroborated by the statement of Charles A. Dana, brother-in-law to Ripley. Dana often had been a guest of his sister, Mrs. George Ripley, at Brook Farm. At the time of Ripley's death in 1880, Charles Dana was editor of *The New York Sun*. In his editorial about the deceased, and the Brook Farm period, he said:

"He had very few intimate friends, then or at any time; yet three men were especially near to him, influencing his mind by their conversation, and writings. These men were George Bancroft, Orestes A. Brownson, and Theodore Parker."

Before establishing the *Boston Quarterly Review*, Brownson had appeared some half a dozen times in the Unitarian organ, *The Christian Examiner*. We gather Ripley's impression of those articles from a statement in *The Dial*. In volume 1 of that magazine Ripley's article appears. In it he credits Brownson's essays with having formed "a new era in the history of that able journal."

In this "new era" that we hear again and again credited to Orestes A. Brownson, lies the conclusion that the fountain head of Boston's stream of thought came from the mind of Brownson. The quotation above is taken from an extensive criticism of *Brownson's Writings*. Five pages farther on in *The Dial*, Ripley writes concerning *New Views of Christianity, Society, and Progress*:

"It has already formed a conspicuous era in the mental history of more than one who is seeking for the truth of things in the midst of painted, conventional forms."

*The Western Messenger* frequently quoted complete pages from *The Boston Quarterly*; and Clarence Gohdes quotes Brownson's contemporaries as looking upon the editor with favor. He was, definitely, a leader in the thought of his day:

"Emerson, in 1836, was discussing a 'question out of Brownson's book,' Alcott visited him, and noted in his diary: 'Emerson and Furness, Brownson and Ripley, they furnish the best talent in the liberal church.' Of the group that later met in the rooms of Elizabeth Peabody to discuss the vexing question of socialism, a group interested in the establishment of Brook Farm, Brownson was the most influential. . . . Indeed so eminent was Brownson in the New England renaissance that he was, in his day, usually considered to be one of its chief leaders. In 1841, for example, a writer for *The New York Review* announced the fact that Brownson, Parker, and Emerson were to be held as 'the new world apostles' of the new Christianity."

Of the names of these "new world apostles," the ordinary handbook of American literature today carries, in its index, Parker and Emerson; but Brownson is no longer mentioned. Hawthorne, Thoreau, Longfellow, Whittier find place; but not the man that inspired them to think and write. Did he, then, die young and never win a wide reputation? Brownson died at seventy-three; he was known widely as a lecturer, a minister, an editor whose magazines were translated into German, French, and Italian. His correspondents included governors of states, staid college presidents, enthusiasts like Horace Greeley,

world forces like Ward of the *Dublin Review*, Cardinal Newman; and, in April, 1854, His Holiness Pope Pius IX sent a letter of approbation and encouragement for his spirit of defense of the Church.

Orestes Augustus Brownson, then, was known and deeply respected. How was his name erased from the world's records? By whom? Why? To answer these questions, a study of the man's personality may be of service. As an individualist of power, he had challenged certain political policies at crucial times; as a literary critic, he was as scathing in his pronouncements on American productions as was the *Edinburgh Review* when it broke the heart of Keats. Critics are not remembered kindly. Brownson no more spared the feelings of a second-rate temperamental artist than he refrained from expressing his views on politicians posing as statesmen.

Students loved the mental stimulus of the editor's articles. In them they witnessed the trouncing of someone superior to themselves; and, if there might be a response, the game was on. They delighted in it, and watched for the appearance of each new issue. Teachers, too, reveled in the controversies which resulted from calm, casual attacks upon someone's pet scheme or empty theory. Thus, the magazine was popular among certain classes through a long period. And this was true, not only of *The Boston Quarterly*, and later of *The Brownson Quarterly Review*. *The Democratic Review* doubled its subscription during the brief period in which Brownson was identified with it, and staged as pretty a controversial game as any sportsman could ask for.

But pupils and pedagogues do not perpetuate a name. Pupils, generally, are interested in current literature; and, while teachers can cram classics down their throats after they have been pronounced classics, no schoolmaster holds his position by stressing the importance of a fading

idol. Such a teacher but marks himself old-fashioned; and, perhaps, antagonistic to progress.

The literary men of Brownson's day—the men he had made, the men he had taught to think—had the making or the breaking of Brownson's reputation as a rival in letters. Each of these authors had grievances in one way or another; for Brownson was a genius in making enemies for himself. In the first place, he was looked upon as an intruder; he was not recognized as a Boston man. His family had left Massachusetts, and he had come back by a round-about route. He had come, lately, from New Hampshire or Vermont. Someone whispered that he had drifted in from down-state New York. That mattered.

There are certain parts of the United States that possess a strong local patriotism. California gives every preference, other things being nearly equal, to a "native son." A Texan recognizes distinguishing qualities in another from his state; Maryland, Virginia, New York, each holds a bond of understanding among its native citizens. Boston had an exclusive circle sealed like an air-tight compartment.

Then, Emerson, Parker, and the Channings were ministers of unquestioned power in the pulpit; but their congregations had dwindled after Brownson established his Society of Christian Union and Progress. Furthermore, many of Emerson's ideas are, to all appearances, rewarmed Brownson paragraphs, but they had come to him through the over-soul (this time, of Thoreau) by which all Transcendentalists communed with God; and Emerson more than once, despite Alcott's diary, disowned acquaintance with Brownson.

All these men were gentlemen; some of them were ladylike gentlemen. When Brownson first came among them they had exchanged glances—at his large frame, his blunt speech, and his deep voice. They were smaller men than he, in some ways; and some of them took refuge

from their humiliation in his presence by laughing behind his back at his number thirteen shoes and his disregard for certain social customs. They had tried to floor him in an argument sprinkled with Latin quotations, and with a phrase or two of Greek. To their utter astonishment, Brownson not only understood; but he completed their quotations, turned the debate to their disadvantage, and to his own triumph. Such chagrin is not easily forgotten. The confounded participants did not seek a renewal of the experience; but they were comforted in the fact that his pronunciation of the classics was not perfect. Later, they found subject for aristocratic mirth in re-quoting his Greek with a misplaced spondee.

Ripley, Bancroft, and Charles Dana were the deepest men of the group. They all considered Brownson an aristocrat in the sense that he was essentially a scholar, a bestower of such bounty as he had, and a man of large vision. They remained his friends. Brownson's *American Republic*, published in 1865 carries the inscription:

"To the Honorable George Bancroft, the erudite, philosophical, and eloquent historian of the United States, this feeble attempt to set forth the principles of government, and to explain and defend the constitution of the American Republic, is respectfully dedicated, in memory of old friendship, and as a slight homage to genius, ability, patriotism, private worth and public service."

Of course, Bancroft was not without disappointment in Brownson when, in 1840, his appointee's article in the *Boston Review* contributed to the defeat of Van Buren, (as we shall see later under the title, *The Democratic Leader*). Bancroft had a mistake to live down among his political associates. The two men had had their differences; yet there was a warm heart, and an intense loyalty

behind that dedication. Brownson was still trying, after twenty-five years, to make amends.

Brownson mentions within the complimentary inscription the qualities that he most admires—the qualities, indeed, that were generally admitted to be his own. But Bancroft had more friends than Brownson had. He had, perhaps, a half fear of the impulsive giant. At any rate he could not quite forget the bitter disappointment at Brownson's Marine Hospital blunder. Besides, the very genius of the editor irritated; his remarkably incisive intellect, carried forward by an entire self-confidence, reproached lesser minds by its very being. Brownson was always under the imperative necessity of uttering his thoughts. This gave the impression of an aggressive attitude which, coupled with his massive person, made for a dominance of personality that silenced in his presence the initiative of many potential friends—that crushed, indeed, some movements in which he was vitally interested.

Delicately strung individuals were sometimes frightened by the volume, force, and velocity in Brownson's orations. His patriotism was militant. He was a warrior always—a crusader for one cause or another. Only a great theme satisfied his strong mind, his earnest desire for truth, and his gift of form. He boldly mocked fads and pretenses; and he exercised American sympathy for the under dog. While he was scathing with Puritan and British oppression, he was gentle with the needy. He wrote:

"Sinners are gained by love, and won over to the Lord, not by severity, but by the infinite tenderness of the gospel. Some of our occasional readers may be surprised to hear us say this, for we are supposed by not a few to have no bowels of compassion; to be dry, hard, severe, unrelenting. Perhaps we are; and whether so or not is of no importance to the

public. Yet there is an obvious distinction between severity in the enunciation of principles, and harshness in their application to individuals."

But he remained a man of no compromise. He had the profound moral demands of a religious faith taken seriously. He knew that his mind was uncommon; he knew that his spirit was unusually great. This made him active; not as an egotist, but as a strong man with a purpose and responsibility. He wrote:

"God has given to each human being born into the world a high and important mission, a solemn and responsible charge."

Brownson's neighbors found it difficult at times to endure his execution of "the high and responsible charge" that he assumed in their regard. They resented the frankness and bluntness of his attack. They knew his claim to have "never truckled to public opinion"; but they would like to regard him as glad to have their approval, and sorry to see their frown. There are few things more humiliating than to be left for an indefinite length of time with a lifted eyebrow awaiting the attention of an offender. Certain social circles resented his ignoring them; and they disliked him deeply.

Still, the written word could be evaluated quite apart from the man's personality. *The Boston Quarterly Review*, was according to Ripley:

"the best indication of the culture of philosophy in this country, and the application of its speculative results to the theory of religion, the criticism of literary productions, and the institutions of society, we presume no one will dispute, is to be found in this journal."

Brownson considered himself a member of "The Boston

School." In a controversy with a younger group, he broke out with the boast:

"Were we not trained in Boston, 'the Hub of the Universe,' at a time when it really was the focus of all sorts of modern ideas, good, bad and indifferent? What have any of you to teach one who participated in the Boston intellectual movement from 1830 to 1844? We Bostonians were a generation ahead of you."

Again and again Brownson made casual references to "our ideas of Christian democracy," and what "*we* had then to do," in his discussion of hopes and plans for the Democratic Party:

"The American state contemplates progress, and provides for its own amendment. What we had then to do was to imbue the Democratic Party with our ideas of Christian democracy, in order to wield the whole political power of the Union in favor of the end contemplated, and to make the state a truly Christian state, or to develop it into that organization of mankind which was to rule the future. It was with this view that my *Quarterly Review* [*The Boston*] after the publication of its first number, in January, 1838, supported the Democratic party, and labored to imbue it with the doctrine of what was then called the Boston School."

G. H. Emerson, editor of the *Universalist Quarterly* says in the October number, 1856:

"Other writers may have a larger number of readers, but no one has readers of such various character. He [Brownson] has the attention of the intellectual men of all sects."

It may be that the omission of Brownson's name from

literary histories is due to the fact that Theodore Parker was a bigot. He could not forgive Brownson's conversion to Catholicism. It is possible that he, more than any other, buried the name of Brownson beneath those of lesser men. He was the accepted biographer of his contemporaries; and he skillfully omitted the mention of anything great or small that Brownson did. He did not mention Brownson's name. Parker says in the *Life of Ripley* that the man was faithful to Mrs. Ripley "even after she had become a Catholic." Catholicism was to Parker something like leprosy. He washed his hands of Brownson when that man entered the Church.

Yet, when he spoke his unprejudiced mind, the same biographer admired the strength of Brownson's writings. In a letter dated December 18, 1840, while Brownson was still a Protestant minister, Parker in addressing Convers Francis, compares the *Quarterly* edited by Brownson with the *Dial* at the time; but he realized that it compared unfavorably with the master achievement from Brownson's hand. The *Dial* seemed to him like delicate gauze woven of vague abstractions as compared to the strength of texture in *The Boston Quarterly*. Said Parker before his prejudice was aroused:

"Apropos of the *Dial*, to my mind it bears about the same relation to the *Boston Quarterly* that Antimachus does to Hercules. Alcott daintily arrayed . . . to a body of stout men in blue frocks, with great arms, and hard hands and legs like the pillars of Hercules."

Brownson's was of a stature to fulfil trust. In pioneer America, every man was king. If the demands of one citizen irked another, the dispute was settled man to man. But Brownson never fought a duel. The greatest hardship that he ever put upon another's physical being, according to all available records, was his throwing of an abusive

little Yankee over the stove-pipe in a grocery store, when he himself was sixty years of age. Brownson dared to ignore peril, and to speak plainly. He was a man of private worth who led a laborious and sober life.

It was in praise of Carlyle's *Past and Present* that Brownson wrote his essay, *The Present State of Society* for the *Democratic Review* of July, 1845. Here we find him stressing qualities that abound in his own writings. Note the simplicity of the phrase that expresses Carlyle's clearness: "He lays open the word and makes you see the fact." In that sentence Brownson lays open a fact, to show a word at its heart. He felt a fine distinction between shades of meaning in words, and in their relation to the things signified by them. This fact made him keenly resentful of editorial cutting and revision. A hasty editing could change the meaning of a philosophical statement completely. He would be misunderstood and criticized thereby; but, more than that, some readers might be led astray. He expressed this fear in the simple sentence: "Error makes its way only on the wings of truth."

Brownson was a man of many humanitarian interests, and he was a vigorous man. If he was a part of the Boston group, he was not a follower.

In a sense, Brownson can represent no school; because, in his search for truth, and for the satisfaction of mental certitude, his publications were strangely contradictory. Each change of view made the Brownson of today seem inconsistent with the Brownson of yesterday; but, in reality, there was less change than is at first apparent. He always loved his fellowmen, and he always loved God. He was for a time inexact in his notion of God, and of how to please Him; but he was not inert, and he forced the cultured men of his day to think on the subjects that absorbed him.

That is why the whole group is considered a body of philosophical thinkers. Brownson did not love philosophy

for itself; but he hungered for the truths that it could point out for him. Others might oppose him or agree; but he forced them to grapple with the problems that he presented.

Another answer to the pertinent question of why Brownson's name was obliterated from the history of his time, is the fact that his articles were frequently unsigned. Bernard Whitman, editor of the *Christian Examiner*, wrote him in December, 1833:

"Your letters in the *Register* have been much liked . . . I was however surprised yesterday to find that many in Boston did not know their author. . . . Mr. Francis, one of the very first men, spoke in high terms of the letters. . . . Mr. Emerson from Boston did not know the author. . . . You can do more than any one else to produce the right result."

But perhaps no reason so contributed to the omission of Brownson's name from the literary records as his own singular indifference to recognition in his own day. He was busy announcing his findings; and he was glad when he knew that his ideas met with applause. But he had not the self-advertiser's instinct of identifying his name with the work of his pen. Naturally, others would not be more careful of his fame than was the author himself. It is true that most of the educated Americans of Brownson's day recognized the general monitor's work even though it was not signed.

Undoubtedly he received a certain amount of pleasure from letters commending essays that had appeared anonymously. It was a mark of distinction to be picked and recognized among the other contributors of such a periodical as *The Catholic World*, whose policy forbade signature. But there were a few times when the lack of an identifying mark proved a distinct disadvantage. Brownson was blamed for imprudent articles which he did not

write. On those occasions the actual authors did not declare themselves, and permitted Brownson, the common target of the day, to endure one more thrust. They needed their reputations. They thought Brownson could afford the attack; and perhaps he believed it himself.

Emerson's *Journal* tells of Charles Lane having taken "a paper and pencil out of his pocket, and asked Brownson to give him the names of the profoundest men of America. Brownson stopped and gave him one, and then another, and then his own for a third."

But much that Brownson wrote was of only contemporary interest. His articles on slavery, on state rights, or on controversial political problems of his day, are not of perennial interest. They were powerful, and they swayed his audience; but, until a revival of the author's popularity, they will not claim many readers. The cause of their force has been removed. No one, today, needs to be convinced that slavery should have no place in the United States; yet, the essays are magnificent specimens of strong, elegant English. In the course of the Brownson revival they will find admiring readers.

Many reasons, then, have contributed to Brownson's being ignored in all literary histories written by contemporaries: his independence of party affiliations, his severity, his frankness, his utter refusal to compromise truth as a literary critic, his lack of local kinship, the spirit of rivalry among the ministry and his dominating personality, of which Mr. Emerson complains:

"Brownson never will stop and listen, neither in conversation, but what is more, not in solitude."

There is no question but that the personality of the zealot annoyed his associates; and, that Brownson's dominating spirit irritated Emerson more than he ever expressed in words. But Gohdes declares that the factor most largely responsible for the failure of scholars to

credit Brownson's efforts with full importance is religious prejudice in the biographers and commentators of his time. He says that it is not his inordinate lack of intellectual restraint, although that accusation is true; neither will he admit it to be his heat in argument, but "the fact that in 1844 he joined the Catholic Church, and immediately began to subject his erstwhile associates, along with himself, to criticism of the most acrid character."

Undoubtedly, the Protestant world resented Brownson's conversion to Catholicism; and when one considers the fears, anxieties and resentments that grew among members of the Catholic Church toward Brownson before his death, one sees that the man had lost one group without permanently gaining the other. Protestants followed him before he entered the Church, and were in accord with him. Catholics followed him at the same time, anxiously awaiting the moment of his declaration of faith in the Church toward which they could see him steering. He carried both on his list of subscribers for the *Boston Quarterly* and the *Brownson Quarterly* until 1845.

*The Convert* was published in 1857. It traced Brownson's steps to, and within, the Church. In January, 1858, the *Princeton Review*, an organ of the old school Presbyterians, published an elaborate review of it. Brownson considered the essay a Protestant attempt to neutralize the damaging effect which *The Convert* might have on Presbyterianism. It warns all members, and especially students for the ministry, against the influence of the book. At the same time it concedes that, "there are passages of great power and truthfulness in the volume."

"Mr. Brownson has long been noted for attempting bold and reckless feats as a writer upon literature, philosophy, politics, and theology. This audacity, combined with a considerable power of expressing himself in classic, nervous English, has given him a

place among our American notabilities. On his own showing, he has by turns, been the adherent, expositor, and defender of Universalism, Infidelity, Atheism, Materialism, the Communism of Robert Dale Owen and Fanny Wright, St. Simon and St. Hilaire, the Eclecticism and Pantheism of Cousin, together with the social, political, and ecclesiastical theories which thence emerge. After this tortuous course, becoming 'everything by turns, and nothing long,' he very rationally concluded that the best use that men can make of their intellects is to submit them into infallible guidance. From historical and philosophical considerations, he reasoned himself into the belief that the Roman Pontiff alone possesses those prerogatives of infallibility and authority, which are sufficient to keep him out of those vagaries into which, and out of which his unaided reason had so long been worming its way,

to find no end,  
In wandering mazes lost.

. . . He judged well, that in matters divine we need a divine guide. He showed his wonted facility of educating great conclusions from slender premises, when he judged the Pope of Rome to be such a guide, rather than the sure word and very oracles of God himself."

Brownson's reply denies the St. Hilaire accusation, the charge of Pantheism, and other things:

"The reasoning the reviewer ascribes, in this extract, to the author may be very conclusive, but it is not the process by which he came into the Church. . . . The reviewer forgets that he has just said in the preceding paragraph, that 'from historical and philosophical considerations he (the author) *reasoned*

himself into the belief that the Roman Pontiff alone possesses . . .”

And thus the controversy was on. Brownson’s reply came in his April *Quarterly*. In it one finds what the unsympathetic have termed “criticism of the most acrid character”:

“We have read . . . with some curiosity and with due attention. . . . It is not very courteous, very sweet tempered, or very fair but we suppose that it harmonized with the manners and taste of an old school Presbyterian, who has inherited the spirit of Calvin . . . if not their learning, their theological science and philosophical ability. It is difficult to reduce the reviewer’s article to a systematic form, or to bring its various loose and rambling statements to a logical test. . . . A great part of the article is apparently devoted to the very agreeable task of disparaging, as far as possible, the character, and invalidating the testimony of the author. . . . Yet we cannot pass over this article in absolute silence; for there are a great many people in this world who cannot understand the expressiveness of silence.”

Brownson tears the fabric to bits, and answers it sentence by sentence thus:

“‘The rankest rationalism and infidelity are on the margin of abject submission to the most stolid and domineering hierarch.’ There is truth in that as the author of *The Convert* himself proved by his abject submission, in early life, to the Presbyterian Church.”

Then follows a lengthy discussion of the Catholic grounds for the belief in the infallibility of the Pope. Finally, Brownson insists that nothing he has said of Presbyterianism could have put the sect in as bad a light as did the reviewer of *The Convert* in his harshness, bit-

terness, arrogance, and the illiberal quality of his article. He ends:

"If the reviewer will leave off personalities, and consent to discuss the question at issue between him and us, dispassionately, calmly, fairly, on their merits, we shall be happy to meet him again."

That is a fair challenge, and while Brownson had been severe in his reply, his cruelty is the austere violence of clarity. The bitter resentment of his humiliated opponents was the more deep because of that. They had been made to condemn themselves by venturing too near to the flood-light of Brownson's intense reasoning. They had stood in the clarified atmosphere of truth.

The Catholic Church was at last the religious amalgamating force which he accepted as the hope for the poor and of the earnest. Brownson wished everyone to know the unprejudiced truth about it. He could detect sham at a glance, and crumble it like chalk at a touch. A body of profound Protestants had followed him to the threshold of the Church. Their enthusiasm had carried them further than they willed to go. Brownson had drawn some through curiosity, some through interest, and some through an involuntary fascination for his independent spirit. A discerning group of Catholics within the nation and beyond it had been watching the convert with pride and admiration. They were happy to claim him as their own.

But the great man was to meet, within the Church, the same difficulty among leaders, the same grudging sort of recognition, the same blights to his fame: jealousy, prejudice, silence. The time came when none might venture without apology to name Brownson a great man. Prejudice against him became the vogue among influential Catholics in America during the lifetime of Archbishop Hughes—Brownson's most productive years.

And so the inspirer of Brook Farm, the leader of Christian Union and Progress, the editor, through fifty years, of magazines widely read in America and translated abroad, dropped into neglect in his declining years, into utter silence when he died. He who made a "new Lebenstag" for Thoreau, a "new age" for the *Christian Examiner*, "a conspicuous era in the mental history of more than one," had his name carefully erased from some records, and carelessly omitted from others. Thoreau lives on, and talks over some of Brownson's ideas with Emerson; Parker continues in all literary histories of America; the trio of the "new world apostles" becomes only two: Parker and Emerson.

The "flowering of the Puritanic spirit" has been pictured without the central trunk of its growth. It was too large for the little plot of ground in which it grew; its bark was a trifle rough. Is that why the "flowering" appears as in vases, surrounded by mystery, and without trace of whence it came?

## CHAPTER VIII

### Brook Farm

WITHIN a year after the establishment of Brownson's Society, George Ripley found a way to attend the meetings occasionally. To do it he changed the time of his own services. That meant that he was seeing eye to eye with Brownson. The two men were of one mind and one enthusiasm; they were a mental stimulus to one another. Ripley remained after the sermon, went home with Brownson, or took him to the Ripley home, where the meeting continued until early, or late, morning.

Ripley was horrified to learn that Brownson had barely escaped Catholicism only a couple of years back through his reading of "that remarkable journal," *L'Avenir*; the magazine was conducted by Lacordaire, Lamennais, and Montalembert in the interest of Catholicism in France. It had stood for progress, and was sweeping Brownson with it until the old Church condemned and excommunicated Lamennais. This proved to Brownson's satisfaction that that Church was dead, and drove him to the determination of building The Church of the Future. Ripley saw it had been a narrow escape.

After three years of much conversation Ripley fashioned a scheme which looked workable toward the discovery of truth. There were many ministers who wished to set up a center of religious activity in opposition or rivalry to the Christian Union. That was not Ripley's intention; but he did believe that, at the end of each meeting, many men were just beginning to see light. The time intervening between sessions was disastrous. Many inspirations

were beyond recapture. If a group of highly intellectual minds, morally well-intentioned souls, could be separated from the distracting demands of business and society and permitted to follow thoughts to their completion, great good would result.

To this end the Brook Farm of two hundred acres was purchased. Ripley and his wife put \$1000 each into the project. Mrs. Ripley got her brother Charles Dana interested to the extent of a substantial donation. Marianne Ripley joined them, and a goodly group offered encouragement to the extent of increasing the fund. Orestes Brownson was present at the second meeting, approved their title, *The Brook Farm Institute of Agriculture and Education*, and promised to recommend it with his heartiest sanctions. At the time he had no money to spend in this way, and his home and duties were established at Chelsea; but he had no doubt that Brook Farm would prosper.

By 1841 it was a reality. The Pratts joined; as did Charles Whitmore, Sarah Sterns, William B. Allen, and Nathaniel Hawthorne. Bronson Alcott did not let the matter of a family to support stand between him and his communion with the over-soul. He brought his pedlar trinkets with him, and perfected them while he meditated. Emerson walked at last in the proper setting. No feature of America's literary history appeals more strongly to man's imagination than does this romantic venture. The location of the dream haven was eighty miles from Boston amid the splendors of natural beauty; and the aims were idealistic. All centuries had admitted that business was likely to be a barrier to spiritual progress, to the power of contemplation, to the concept of poetry. In the history of the Catholic Church one learns that ancient Europe had its Anthonys and its Celestines in rather considerable numbers. Men who become intensely interested in the spiritual growth of themselves and of a

few kindred spirits, have over and over again sought solitude, for the contemplation of their Maker.

The age of Brownson had the quite recent example of a literary group in England who lived in a secluded Lake Region and established a school of poetic thought in the North near the border of Scotland. The members of the Lake School had shown scarcely more signs of economic sagacity than had the hermits themselves. Coleridge, Wordsworth, Southey, and their followers, loved nature wild and untouched; they loved dreams, the experiences of the mind reaching into the unknown and the unknowable. These three men and their families grew into the unity of one economic support, through no theory of religion or psychology. They were united by the necessities of life, by personal friendships, and by the claims of charity upon in-laws.

The Lake School differed widely from a hermit's life; and the Brook Farm differed widely from both. And yet there were points of similarity in the three. All were bent upon disentangling the mind from the pursuit of economic gain; upon the applying of the free mind to concentrated thought; upon the search for something, some intangible spirit of nature, some Personality behind nature.

The ancients of the desert had fled a believing society for the leisure of contemplation. They profoundly meditated on a God, mysterious indeed, but doubted not at all. They sought a calm, uninterrupted study of the divine, not in creation, but in the Creator Himself. They sought not to bring a message away; but, quite selfishly, to satisfy the hunger of their own souls. What they have written, or told, or preached has been incidental. It has been history; but not the findings of an experiment. That was individual in a way that could not be shared.

The hermits left society to grow spiritually strong; the Lake School of poets went out to dip their pens in light; the Transcendentalists aimed, besides, so to catch and

reflect the truths of religion as to replenish the threadbare faith of their fellows. Ripley's adherents were a unit in no way save in their search to find the lost God of the universe. They hoped to discover Truth after or through their knowledge of God. They did not see God and Truth as, in any sense, one. But truth, being in the mind of God, could be known, directly, through placing the human mind in contact with the mind divine. Ripley expressed his hope that "Those who are not converted . . . may find an aspect of religion which they had not considered; and new thought may at length give birth to new faith."

Many of the Brook Farm members were literary men, incapable of Brownson's quality of sustained thought, but above average in their power of leadership and of transmitting a message. Lesser adherents watched Emerson, Ripley, Hawthorne, Thoreau, Bronson Alcott, Margaret Fuller, and Charles Dana as they gathered, each in his own way, facts for his expectant followers. Often they sat alone in secluded nooks, worked at hobbies, and gave themselves up to contemplation. They caught a wisp of truth today and another tomorrow. Out of them all they would finally construct the God of their choice.

The dreams of this American school were not induced by any drug nor by natural slumber. The best of them were the product of certain active, elevated minds, striving strenuously to catch and float with a stream of thought above themselves. This current of ideas they believed to exist as a material manifestation of the creative stream of God's intellect. Transcended beyond material things, and resting in supremacies, the minds of a special few might glimpse eternal truths. About a nucleus thus obtained, the Transcendentalists would build a church in harmony with Brownson's Christian Union.

George Ripley and his wife were the central figures at Brook Farm; but Brownson stood behind it as a project worthy of respect. Henry Brownson is unwilling to pro-

nounce in how far his father was responsible for the Brook Farm idea. But he is sure that the principles were talked over with him. Ripley considered family caste a dreadful scourge in modern civilization and so, Henry says, did his father.

Isaac Hecker, when a boy, attended the Brook Farm School for a time. He quotes Brownson as having expressed the belief that "The views, and feelings, and wants of these men and women are those of the great mass of all Christian communities—the desire to realize the Christian ideal."

The statement of their purpose is couched in Carlyle's phrase. Brownson helped to choose the motto:

"To make some nook of God's creation a little fruitfuller, better, more worthy of God; to make some human hearts a little wiser, manfuller, happier;—more blessed, less accursed: This is the work for a god."

And, indeed there was something of the god and goddess in the impracticality of the members. As Brownson saw them, there was little of "the man of the world" in any one of them except Channing and Emerson. Margaret Fuller, the posing coquette, did not seem to him contriving. Her melancholy seemed natural to a pensive soul. She was the humored daughter of Timothy Fuller, member of Congress and man of affairs. She arranged her hair to look her best—and who would blame her? She was highly imaginative and had many interests. She studied German with James Freeman Clarke, she listened to Hedge, and she adored Emerson. All concerned enjoyed the experience of knowing her.

Charles Dana was fresh from Harvard halls, a man of more depth than most of the associates. He taught Greek and German at the Brook Farm. Christopher Cranch, another member, was also a Harvard man, a picturesque

type, dramatic, a musician of some worth, and an artist with his pen besides.

Alcott, a farmer's son turned pedlar, was said to sit motionless, with perfect composure, for a longer time than any other human being in the history of time. He made his own ink by steeping various barks in indigo. Then he added alum, bottled it and sold it with his less profitable wares of combs, trinkets, needles, and toys made of bent wire.

Jonas Garrish, the driver conveying guests from West Roxbury to the Farm twice a day, was an entertaining character who knew a great many items, and imagined many more. He spread knowledge and imagination gratis to all who paid fare on his stage; passengers would discover Alcott "under a certain tree watching his buckets of dye"; they would recognize "Cranch by his well shaped head and curly hair." Mrs. Ripley was "a beautiful and agreeable woman" of many accomplishments. She taught "languages,—knew all of them,—and kept a house too neat to walk in," really; but everyone seemed happy. Ripley, himself was a smart man; "likely to make a good haul from it. And he deserved it. Any man that could invent a big thing like this, and get people interested, deserved the best." Emerson? He would be with that Fuller lady. "You've all seen her pictures."

Hawthorne was the son of a Salem skipper. Garrish had known his father well. Nathaniel had been an odd boy; but "folks said he had come to life in Boston." Then all of a sudden in the middle of winter, Hawthorne gave up a fine place in town, and drove out in a snow storm to this spot. Garrish offered his personal opinion that he was too soft-handed to like it long: "It's one thing to dream about turnips, and another to make them grow in straight rows." Hawthorne didn't like the Custom House; and Jonas prophesied, "He won't like this."

And Hawthorne did not like Brook Farm, as his

*Blithedale Romance* makes very clear. He saw none of Margaret Fuller's charm, and was annoyed beyond description at the hobbies of eccentrics. His melancholia returned. Instead of putting a spade in the earth and thinking of the stars, Hawthorne could not look at the unclouded sky and uninhabited acres without revolting at life amid clods and grasshoppers. Hawthorne was distinctly a city-minded man. The old stage-driver was right. Nathaniel could not fit in at Brook Farm.

Meantime, Hecker wrote to his father-adviser:

"I do not know but that my mind will lead me to make at least a trial at Fruitlands as they call their place. . . . I made a visit to the Shakers while there, [Mt. Lebanon, N. Y.] and a lesson in self-denial I did receive from them. . . . I go to Brook Farm this afternoon. . . . [Signed,] Your son Isaac."

Brownson thought that the peace and quiet of the place, the rich clean air of the groves, and the excursions in boats down the Charles River, might aid in building up the health of the slender young man from New York City. He raised no objection to Isaac's going to Brook Farm. His friend Ripley had preached in the Unitarian pulpit in Boston for fourteen years. He would write George to have an eye on Isaac; and occasionally he would be able to see him himself.

He felt that Isaac Hecker was the making of a great man. He would not wish him "molded" out of his individuality. But that was not Ripley's purpose. He might even send his son, Orestes, there in a year or two. The institution recognized both property and personality; but all ate at a common table, and mingled in a common recreation. Ripley had ruled that "Every community should have its leading purpose. . . . We are a company of teachers. . . . Others may be companies of manufacturers, or of agri-

culturists; . . . Whatever the branch of industry agreed upon, it will be . . . the principal object of pursuit."

It is evident that he wished to secure to the members, and the students, the advantages of associated and active industry. The methods of activity, he ruled, must be compatible with high intellectual and moral culture and with refinement of manner. The most exacting patron could ask little more. The Ripley family was widely known. At last the great-hearted man had room enough to entertain all of his friends at once. Isaac would run no risk in going. He should flourish there where genius would be as common as light.

Thus Brownson gave his approbation to the experiment at Brook Farm, but Transcendentalism itself was never a part of him. George Lathrop, who sought out the doctor before his own entrance to the Catholic Church and who had talked the matter over with him through long hours, pronounces Brownson in his later years a close link between Transcendental thought and the mysticism embodied in the Catholic Church. That is because Brownson understood both so thoroughly. He was able to show in how far Transcendentalists were right; and just where their philosophy stopped short of Brownson's later conclusions and dwindled away into vague surmise. He makes this statement:

"To distinguish between the transient and permanent in religion was the common aim of the Boston movement from 1830 to 1841, when we ourselves began to turn our own mind, though very timidly and at a great distance, toward the Church. Mr. Emerson, Margaret Fuller, A. Bronson Alcott, and Theodore Parker regarded the permanent elements of all religions as the natural patrimony or products of human nature.

"We differed from them, by ascribing their origin to supernatural revelation made to our first parents

in the garden, universally diffused by the dispersion of the race, and transmitted to us by the traditions of all nations. Following out this view, the grace of God moving and assisting, we found our way to the Catholic Church, in which the form, and the invariable and permanent principle, or rather, the form growing out of the principle, are inseparable, and are fitted by the divine hand to each other. The others, falling back on a sort of transcendental illuminism, sunk into pure naturalism . . . supposed themselves spiritual men and women in possession of the secret of the universe. There was much life, and mental activity, and honest purpose in the movement; but those who had the most influence in directing its course could not believe that anything good could come out of Nazareth, and so turned their backs on the Church. They thought they could find something deeper, broader, and more living than Christianity; and have lost not only the transient, but even the permanent in religion."

But life at the Farm was a stimulating experience. It satisfied most of its members; and there were many imitators of its plan. Nor was it the first communistic experiment attempted in the United States. There were at least four ahead of the Roxbury gathering. The Shakers, to whom Hecker alluded in his letter to Brownson, were established as early as 1787. The Harmonists, in Indiana, took origin in 1805. There were others: the Oneida Community, the Mennonites of Pennsylvania, the Aman Society near Buffalo, New York. Each represented some specific creed, or some economic project. Adin Ballou, the one-time Universalist minister, tried to organize a group at Hopedale, Massachusetts at the time of Ripley's highest registration in Brook Farm. Ballou guaranteed to each member in his rival establishment the necessities of life

during his useful years, and care of all in sickness or old age. There was a spurt of enthusiasm for Hopedale; but Ballou was soon discouraged, and applied to merge his venture with Brook Farm.

However, the standards of the two projects were too widely divergent to admit of negotiations; and the Farm remained an independent center. It was the only community having education and creative writing among its primary aims. The urge for communal life, in a country setting, marked no distinctly religious trend at this time. It resulted from a common resistance, in the pioneer mind, against the noisy march of industrialism and the recognition of danger in isolated country homes. The buzz, rattle, and excitement of steam-powered machinery jarred languid nerves, and could form a brief entertaining diversion; but when it continued, day after day, it appeared to some to grind smoke and dust into their minds.

As the face of New England became dotted with hope-colonies imitating Brook Farm, there was a need of managerial ability in each settlement equal to that in a small factory. The ruling power held all funds and a position of unlimited trust. He must needs be a saint to resist a personal share in large donations. Where he was a dominating character and shrewd, the movement prospered for a time; and then, suddenly, the disappointed adherents discovered that their leader had escaped with the funds. Where he was a weak man, too trusting and charitable, he fed a countryside of parasites. Thus all of them failed.

Brook Farm's leader was deeply religious, anxious to serve his disciples, congenial. It was written by the fates that he would be imposed upon. He received letters from distant admirers, complimenting him upon the Brook Farm enterprise, asking for funds to transport them to peace and security. Daily before dawn Ripley hustled out with lantern and bucket to milk before breakfast;

more than once, he was confronted at the barn with travel-weary, aimless souls who had arrived in the night. Their arrival at the place was the first success of their lives, and it would be an assurance of heaven if they might remain. George Ripley's financial failure was inevitable; but the tragedy was precipitated by a fire in 1846. It burned the new philanthropies of Brook Farm.

Brownson says of its founder:

“Ripley was a man of rare attainment, one of our best scholars, and ablest metaphysicians . . . well acquainted with various plans of world reform from Plato's Republic to Fourier's Phalanx; but the establishment . . . was the result of his spiritual wants . . . the gospel of love and equality. . . . A few men and women, of like views and feelings, grouped themselves around him; not as a master, but as their friend and brother . . . not a substitute for church and state, (like Owen, Fourier, Saint-Simon), but left these standing in all their necessity and force. It was an aggregation of families, seeking to enlarge the sphere of the family, by extending the family feeling and relations beyond the ties of blood, but without superseding them. Leroux said, 'while preserving the family inviolate, to break the family caste.'”

Differences grew between Ripley and Brownson though both men tried to prevent a break. In a letter dated December 18, 1842, Ripley says:

“I hope you know me too well to believe that any small thing would diminish my great respect for your intellect, or the sincere friendship I have cherished from the first of our acquaintance.”

But Brownson, while sympathetic with many phases of the Brook Farm Movement, could never agree with the

religious tenets of Transcendentalism. While yet a Protestant he wrote of it as a "miserable" creed, which "spins Truth, Good, Beauty, even God, Himself, out of the human soul, as a spider spins its web, out of its own bowels."

In the first number of *Brownson's Quarterly Review*, the editor reminded his readers:

"The Church, and all really valuable institutions, by which society is elevated and carried forward, are given to man by his Maker, and not developed by, nor from, the human soul. God alone is able to create without pre-existing matter; man can create only by means of a matter foreign to himself."

In *The Flowering of New England*, one finds a realistic sense of the place and of Brownson's relation to its members:

"The stage from Scollay Square brought visitors, a few, at first, those of the inner circle, then hundreds, and even thousands of 'civilisees' as the farmers call the rest of the population. Margaret Fuller came to conduct a Conversation on Education,—on '*What can we do for ourselves and others?*' *Impulse* was the subject on one occasion, an appropriate theme at the Farm, where spontaneity was so much in order. Throwing oneself on the floor was not so bad, but yawning was a little too impulsive. Georgiana Bruce burned pastilles to perfume Margaret's room, and brought the morning coffee to her bedside. For Margaret had become another Pauline Wiesel, the heroine of the German Romantics, whom Humboldt walked thirty miles to see. Emerson often came to lead the talk; sometimes Bronson Alcott. Theodore Parker, who lived close by,—(he had a church at West Roxbury), walked over often for a chat about

philosophy or farming. Orestes Brownson dropped in, shouted and pounded on the table, and strolled with Isaac Hecker in the grove. They were both on the road to Rome, like Mrs. Ripley; and Brownson's coming always occasioned a talk on Catholicism, Pascal, or Port Royal. . . . Brownson, the rustic giant from Vermont who had passed through so many religious phases, was not a welcome guest. That there was method in his truculence no one had any reason to suppose; and he had taken up his Greek and Latin to satisfy his Catholic advisers, at a time when his mental bones had set. He made sad work of the spondees and dactyls, which the patient George Ripley would not have minded if Brownson had not appeared to be showing off. As for George Bradford, the ever-gentle, who had learned his Greek and Latin in the cradle, he could not sleep for the misery that Brownson caused him. False vowels and wrong measures were as painful to him as a saxophone would have been. He dreamed one night that he was a Catholic convert and Brownson, appointed his confessor, obliged him to repeat after him a Latin psalm from the Vulgate. Bradford awoke in agony."

Still many held converse with Brownson's giant mind for the sake of his greatness of thought, despite the fact that his sense of poetic rhythm was imperfect. Audiences and readers valued him more deeply than did his close neighbors, who were often rude to him. He intensely appreciated a good listener, and wrote to Alexander H. Everett, President of the University of Louisiana, to thank him for his courtesy when he called upon Brownson in Chelsea. Everett wrote back:

"I certainly claim no merit for having treated with respect and attention a countryman whom the high-

est authorities abroad have considered as entitled to our highest intellectual distinctions. . . . I have no motive for seeking and cultivating your acquaintance but the pleasure which I have found in your conversation. . . .”

Among those with whom Brownson conversed at the Farm were Lowell, Greeley, and Whittier. He was genial with all; but, before he moved to Boston, he had made one close friend:

“One man, and one man only, shared my entire confidence, and shared my most secret thought. Him, from motives of delicacy, I do not name; but in the formation of my mind, in systematizing my ideas, and in general development of culture, I owe more to him than to any other man. . . . We have since taken divergent courses, but I loved him as I loved no other man, and shall so love and esteem him as long as I live. He encouraged me, and through him chiefly I was enabled to remove to Boston and commence operations. Dr. Channing and several of his personal friends, without knowing all of my purpose, also assisted me.”

Henry Brownson, his father’s biographer, is convinced that reference is made here to Emerson. It is hard to know on what evidence this conclusion is based. The man who enabled Brownson to remove to Boston was Bancroft. He was not of the Brook Farm group. He was a more practical man than any at Roxbury. Brownson owed him recognition for his comfortable home beautifully located, and for a salary that removed all financial worry. Bancroft, too, wrote him encouraging letters. He welcomed him back to the editorial field, which Brownson had neglected while disposing of his home and furniture in Canton and moving his family into the steward’s residence at Chelsea:

"But I am very glad you have returned to the work, . . . I claim that we in Massachusetts should aim at a more lofty tone of justice, a nearer approximation to equal rights."

Emerson at no time gave evidence of having "encouraged" Brownson. Among the manuscript collection, the only letter that is signed by Emerson is a refusal to grant a request of Brownson. Emerson thanks the editor for his desire for a contribution on Carlyle for the *Reformer*, and he encloses a ticket of admission to one of his lectures, but he declines to furnish the article:

"I have the success of Carlyle very much at heart, and should gladly get for it a good word in your journal. But I have, at Dr. Walker's request, promised to furnish some notice of it for the *Examiner*; and I wish to do the same thing for a newspaper; meantime, I am fully occupied in a new course of lectures shortly to commence. . . ."

On another occasion, Brownson approached Emerson with the proposition of securing him and other authors at Brook Farm as contributors to his *Boston Quarterly Review*. Emerson left the matter dangling, and within a month set up the *Dial* as a special organ for the dissemination of Transcendental views. There is no concrete evidence that Emerson and Brownson were friends. Bancroft seems to be first; and, next to Bancroft, Ripley.

## CHAPTER IX

### The Democratic Leader

BESIDES the religious and social phases of Brownson's Society, there was in it a distinct political aim to prove Christianity identical with democracy. The position of the Reverend Orestes Augustus Brownson could not have leaped to relative importance had he confined his interests to nurturing an embryo church, and to lending tacit sponsorship to the local Brook Farm experiment. Brownson gave active support to the great heresy of the nineteenth century: A perfect democracy is in itself a perfect Christianity.

The "progress" in the minister's Christian Union lacked point except for his acceptance of the latest thought as the most nearly true and the best. That democratic Christianity could build a Christian democracy, was the very center of his thesis. With it he electrified the nation. Men of importance looked upon him with increasing respect and consulted with him as with one of authority. By voice and pen he made it appear indeed impossible for the rich man to carry his accumulated impedimenta through the needle's eye to Heaven. Furthermore, the inhuman extremes of rivalry in business left no room for Christian fellowship. Said Brownson:

"The great law of His religion was love of man. 'By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye love one another.' 'We know,' said His beloved disciple, 'that we have passed from death to life, because we love the brethren.' Nor was this love to be

confined to one's own family, friends, or nation. We were to love our enemies . . . Jesus proclaimed the worth of man as man, taught the great law of love, and proposed the universal brotherhood of the race, —liberty, equality, fraternity: the noble device of the democratic banner."

Dr. Channing and the New England Unitarians had upheld the idea. The excommunicated Lamennais was leading the liberals of the European continent in maintaining it. Many statements of the Catholic clergy of France, during the French Revolution, could be easily construed to agree. They referred to *le citoyen Christ*. Certain of the Italian clergy held the doctrine when they favored the republican revolution which caused His Holiness to fly from Rome to Gaeta. Democracy was claiming the world. Brownson leaned strongly toward belief that the mind of the collective people is always right; and yet he wrote:

"I never, myself, held the doctrine of native undervived sovereignty of the people. When I believed in no God, I believed in no government; for I could never understand why the people, collectively, should not be under law as well as the people distributively. I always said with St. Paul, 'Non est potestas nisi Deo.' When I renounced my atheism, I derived all power from God, the source of all law and of all justice. I might, and probably did, even as I do now, derive it from God through the people, as the medial origin of government, and thus accept Mr. Bancroft's definition, that 'Democracy is eternal justice ruling through the people.' But the popular doctrine which puts the people in the place of God, and asserts not only people-king, but people-god, I never held; and it is one of the few errors of my time into which I have never fallen. I had to combat the peo-

ple too often. I had to make too frequent war on popular prejudice and popular errors, to believe that whatever is popular is true, right, and just. I had found majorities too often in the wrong, to believe them either infallible or impeccable. . . .”

But Brownson believed that government should be administered more particularly for the good of the common man than for the self-sustaining man of high rank, birth, position, or condition. The effect of government upon the prosperity or the indigence of working men was a matter of absorbing concern to him. He resented the assurance with which the professional politician phrased the catch-words of campaign speech to fool the gullible poor.

Four years previously Brownson had spoken the promises of his party. He had pledged his word with that of the candidates whom he sponsored. But the democracy which he saw practised all about him after that Democratic election had not differed substantially from earlier Whig customs. To himself Brownson admitted that the promises of the Democratic Party in 1836 had not been fulfilled in the now completed Van Buren administration; but, for the present, he saw no better political timber available. He declared himself for Van Buren's re-election. Though a conscientious objector, he was walking with his party hoping to urge it into better paths.

In his own speeches, Brownson avoided reference to unpaid pledges; but he heard other orators, in the 1840 rallies, again proclaiming the supremacy of the people. And, saddest of all, the poor, the struggling majority, applauded, and prepared to vote according to the baton of campaign managers. Brownson observed that the United States, next to England, was the least of all nations favorable to the poor. Both countries seemed to feel their obligations done when aristocracy declared itself democratic at heart.

One year after Van Buren's election, the panic of 1837 had fallen. This had grieved Brownson:

"They do not as the ancient nations did, actually kill their poor or sell them into slavery; but they despise them, shut them in workhouses, and treat them as criminals. Democratic or democratically inclined governments are, for the most part, cruel and hard-hearted. Like corporations, they have no souls and are incapable of tenderness."

The grand maxim of General Jackson, Van Buren's immediate predecessor, had been, "the people are sovereign; if I gain their sanction it is enough." He was a Whig; but he had been more the common man than Van Buren had been. Brownson was embarrassed over the effrontery of local "unprincipled barkers" who sold fake wares, or citizens, with equal gusto.

But the political organ of the party, *The Democratic Review*, had no embarrassment over the routine task of these persons; indeed, it echoed their campaign ballyhoo, and declared again that the people are sovereign, "in their own native might and right." It stressed the matter of universal suffrage, and universal eligibility to office.

The article was campaign literature, calculated by Mr. O'Sullivan to sweep votes into Democratic ballot boxes, despite the fact that the Whig Party was baiting the laborer with the same flattering phrases. Both parties were playing to the eternal optimism of the helpless who found joy in hope because they had nothing to lose. Both parties were practising mob psychology: "The power of the people . . . the power of the people . . . the power of the people."

Thurlow Weed had not forgotten Brownson's sudden scuttling of the Working Man's Party; and he whispered his hopes to a few confidants within the Whig high commission. They prepared their bags to catch the wreckage,

reminding Weed meanwhile that things were different when a man held a spoils job. "That does something to a man's vision toward sympathy for the 'down dog,'" one manager reminded Weed; but he remembered the rejoinder, "Get a copy of next July's *Boston Quarterly*."

Weed left the group with a confident swagger. If his prophecy should come true, he told himself, his personal fortune was secure for life. They had already admitted him to be an uncanny oracle. If someone would only rouse Brownson's sense of justice! Weed came as near to prayer as he had ever ventured.

And then it happened. Brownson's July number of the *Quarterly Review* came out with an essay that shocked the nation, and stopped every politician, Whig or Democrat, in his tracks. The Catholic Encyclopedia gives a brief report of the affair:

"In his *Review* for July, 1840, he carried the democratic principles to their logical conclusions, and urged the abolition of Christianity; meaning, of course, the only Christianity he was acquainted with . . . if, indeed, it be Christianity; denounced the penal code, as bearing with peculiar severity on the poor, and the expense of the poor in civil cases; and, accepting the doctrine of Locke, Jefferson, Mirabeau, Portalis, Kant, and Blackstone, that the right to devise or bequeath property is based on statute and not on natural law, he objected to the testamentary or hereditary descent of property; and, what gave more offense than all the rest, he condemned the modern industrial system of labor and wages. . . . Democrats were horrified by the article; Whigs paraded it as what Democrats were aiming at, and Van Buren who was a candidate for a second term, as President, blamed it as a main cause of his defeat."

To be sure, the Whigs had not been idle before this.

Horace Greeley had issued the first number of the *Log Cabin* as early as May of that year, and Thurlow Weed was busy as manager of the Whigs. But Brownson's paper had the blighting effect of a revelation, from within the Democratic Party, as of the designs of its leaders. Weed is credited with making Harrison President. Brownson is blamed for having defeated Van Buren, which is the same thing. For the purpose of this record, it will be necessary to give only Brownson's share in the event.

Brownson was certain that the laboring man worked at an unfair disadvantage, and he was in sympathy with him. As their leader, his feeling for them had in it no taint of condescending pity, but a sincere regret for their helplessness in poverty. He wanted to see actual opportunity for the instruction of their children. He was weary of educational gestures in the form of promises during campaign speeches. He aimed at real social uplift for the laborer, with a share in the profits of the firm in which each employee worked; and he would not be satisfied with a technical advance toward legal equality. He was as alert in guarding them from all manner of slavery as any hound watching at the hearth of his master.

Brownson felt deeply with his class. He had been poor all his life. To be sure, such "blunders" as this would prevent any man's political advancement. He would lose the "spoils system" appointment; and he would miss the money that the position yielded. For, besides the support of his own family, he always contributed to the livelihood of his aging mother. His twin sister, too, who was unhappily married, frequently wrote to him for funds. She needed money for the rental of the little farm on which she lived near Ballston Spa. In one letter she needed enough to buy a cow; in another, she reported the shortage of hay, and the price per load.

Brownson then was directly informed, and his vision was parallel with that of the poor. He could never forget

the pinched frugality of his childhood. He could never forget that he had consecrated his strength to the lifting of the burdens of his class. With his personal knowledge he coupled various definitions of progress as given by Clay, Calhoun and Webster, who in Brownson's opinion nearly approached the level of statesmen. All of them conceded that progress comes from joint action. Jefferson added to this the encouragement of private interests. Brownson did not object even to Hamilton's plea for a strong central government if it could offer general opportunity. He contended that national prosperity was co-existent with opportunity for the poor and the more numerous classes. If the frugally honest possessed the knowledge requisite for executive positions, democracy could yet be at one with Christianity.

The United States, the nation best fitted to give industrial liberty, was selling itself to the personal ambition of the few. Brownson opposed the interpretation of selfishness as the pursuit of high happiness. He was absorbed in affairs of national policy; but, in politics, as such, or even in the science of economics, beyond the bare problem of economic justice, he was at no period of his life deeply interested. What persons thought and felt, what they suffered from privation of food, or of knowledge, those questions filled Brownson's mind, but he feared the tendency of democracy to reduce all things to a low average, and to substitute popular opinion for truth and justice in the matter of general conduct. He had written:

"Democracy, when social as well as political, elevates not the best men to office, but the most available men,—usually, the most cunning, crafty, or emptyheaded demagogues."

There were many complex causes for mental and moral confusion at this time in America, apart from the inefficiency in statesmen and the inadequacy of the sects.

There were contradictions. The nation was expanding, and work toward that expansion was a patriotic duty and thus a moral virtue. Quotations from the psalms were offered: "The just shall flourish like the palm tree." Money-making by corporations and aid to the poor, while in no sense synonymous, moved forward at an even pace. The successful found it agreeable to believe that money-making was a patriotic duty. The pioneer's sense of superiority was enlivened by his observing the needs of the Indian, and of the poverty-stricken immigrant. The respected early citizen recognized no obstacles, as such, between him and the goal of his choice; he simply determined to pass them by, or to make his way through them. For success was worshiped, and the unsuccessful despised accordingly.

Practical needs of the day tempted educators to instil formulae instead of developing minds to reason; because there was instant demand for men with a knack in business. Prosperity in citizens made for a prosperous nation. The political patter that was recited in every gathering tended to make the individual citizen believe, not that he was a potential ruler of the destinies of men, but that he actually was that important being at the moment. Success at the sacrifice of spiritual values tempted the ambitious. Those who were not protected by dogmatic religion became seriously muddled in their moral outlook. Statesmanship and the future of America were no longer of interest to many; but only private business and the present.

Brownson condemned Daniel Webster, the greatest statesman that New England produced, because he turned right-about-face on the question of tariff when the economic interests of his constituents changed. He condemned Van Buren for riding the whirlwind without attempting to control it. Yet he voted for Van Buren in 1840:

"In 1840, such was the state of certain questions, and such Mr. Van Buren's position, that all those of us, who felt deeply the importance of completing the financial policy commenced under his administration, were obliged either to vote for him, or to vote against our principles."

And yet the essay which he wrote defeated the candidate for whom he voted:

"Man against man and money is not an equal match. Man, ignorant, rude, uncultivated, cannot enter into the political contest on equal terms with the educated, the cultivated man, with all the advantages society can give him. How pretend that you and I are equal, when you can influence a thousand votes, while I can hardly control my own, unless I have the spirit of a martyr? The immense majority of American voters vote with no real will or independence . . .

"If, then, you will have democracy, if you insist on the democratic form, have the courage to go further, and the good sense to adopt the measures necessary to prevent your universal suffrage and eligibility from being a mere sham. You must do more than you have done; you must establish and maintain the substantial equality of conditions, so that not merely the *rights*, but the *mights* of men shall be equal.

"With this thought, I wrote and published in my *Review* for July, 1840, an essay on *The Laboring Classes*, which had a louder echo than I had counted on. It was published during the heat of the presidential electioneering campaign, and I was regarded as a prominent member of the Democratic Party."

This was the moment for which Thurlow Weed had waited:

"The Whig, or opposing party seized it, reprinted it, and circulated it by thousands, if not hundreds of thousands, for the purpose of damaging the party with which I was connected. I was denounced in the press, from the pulpit, and rostrum. My friends shook their heads, and were very sorry that I had been so imprudent; and not a voice was raised in my defense, or in mitigation of the censure with which I was visited. The Democratic journals threw me overboard, and defended themselves as they could, by disowning me, and declaring it unfair, and unjust to hold the party responsible for my eccentricities and extravagances.

"The doctrines of my essay were received by my countrymen with one universal scream of horror, partly affected, no doubt, for party purposes, but partly real and sincere. There was no question that I had gone beyond the point the public could be induced to go with me. Yet I had only drawn from the democratic and Protestant principles, which I had never questioned from my youth up, their legitimate consequences; I had only drawn from the premises supplied by the dominant public opinion, their strictly logical conclusions. . . . If my Protestant and democratic countrymen said, 'Two and two' wherefore could it be wrong for me to add 'make four'? With Protestantism, I denied the church and the priesthood; and with democracy I denied the distinction of classes, of castes, of noble and ignoble, and asserted the political equality a practical fact, a reality, not an illusion. What sin against either had I committed?

"The essay was an honest, undisguised, fearless, and not ineloquent expression of thoughts that had been fermenting in my mind and pressing for years for utterance. In it, I poured out my soul, such as it

was, and kept nothing back. I made my confession to the world, a clean breast of it, and I think my convalescence dates from that moment. But I can hardly read the essay over without being myself shocked, and wondering at my temerity in publishing it. Yet never did I speak more truly my honest thought. . . . Place me where I stood then; place me outside of the Catholic Church, and make me regard that Church as exclusive, as a spiritual tyranny, as all my Protestant countrymen maintain she is, and give me faith in progress by the natural forces of man, and I would today repeat and endorse every paragraph and every word I then wrote."

The *Democratic Review* began a defense of itself against the taint of Brownson, a defense that lasted for several years. At intervals the periodical tried again and again to clear its reputation with the public with some statement as the following:

"The people,—the actual people,—including, on terms of equal rights, all persons of reasonable maturity of years and the ordinary degree and completeness of mental competency to think and act for their own self-government,—the people themselves, in their own native *might* and *right*, are the *primary* and *fundamental* sovereignty.

"Our theory is very simple and plain; and safe enough, too, if Mr. Brownson would be a little less afraid of the people,—and if he would consent to pardon their '*moment de vertige*' in 1840,—it is that the sovereignty *resides* in the people, (the numerical people),—that sovereignty that made the constitution and may unmake it. If that people choose to come together, in their own way, *whether inside or outside the existing forms of law*, and to alter the constitution, it is to their will and their act that my

loyalty is morally due, provided I am *bona fide* satisfied of the fact of the majority."

To this would inevitably come a response from Brownson:

"This is a broad doctrine, and one I do not recollect to have ever seen so clearly and broadly stated by any other writer; nevertheless, it is the new theory . . . acted upon by General Jackson, proclaimed by General Garrison in his inaugural address as President of the United States, assumed by Mr. Dorr and his friends in the case of the suffrage movement, by the governor of Rhode Island, refusing to surrender Mr. Dorr, and implied in Governor Morton's and Ex-President Van Buren's letters to the Committee of the great Clam-bake last fall, at Medbury Grove. . . ."

It is a long article, entitled *The Origin and Ground of Government*. Space will not permit the inclusion of more than a paragraph or two:

"I think I cannot be mistaken in saying that no small portion of our political friends, as well as Mr. Clay and a large portion of the Whig party, do hold that the will of the people, of the great mass of the population, however expressed, however collected, is, if ascertained, the supreme law of the land, and binding on the public functionary. . . .

"There are many of us who glory in the democratic name; . . . but at the same time we hold our government to be a Constitutional Republic, and we believe that freedom and progress are attainable only through law and order. We believe in the sovereignty of the people, under God, when legally assembled in convention. . . .

"The Greek *Demos* does not correspond to the

American use of the word People; but very nearly to what we mean by the phrase common people; . . . not . . . founded on the principle that the majority have the . . . right to govern, a principle not recognized at all by the Athenian Democracy, but because it was in the hands, not exclusively of the Eupatrids, but of the inhabitants of the Demos, or wards, that is, of agriculturalists, merchants, traders, artisans, and mariners. . . . In a more modern sense . . . the *whole* people."

Throughout the learned essay, there is evinced a deep mistrust of all political action. The simple citation of bitter political opponents, all wearing identical badges as marks of distinction but ranged against one another, was effective as a means to disclose the inconsistencies of office seekers. The last quotation appeared in a publication of 1843 but the essay, of which it was a part, was written to justify Brownson's attitude in 1840.

On the rough road that he had traveled, Brownson had experienced nothing like equality with the sons of fortunate citizens. The Democracy had not treated him like the governor's son. His education had been gleaned for himself; his opportunities had been sought by himself; his ability, much begrudged him, was native. His influence had been repeatedly curbed because of his lack of wealth and position. He knew that the "equality" spoken of by the politicians was meant to convey a declaration that man, ignorant, ill-dressed, uncultured, was a ranking associate with man and money: with man and all that money connotes in the United States. He was not deceived; and he wished those who used the term to know that he challenged their deliberate insincerity. Furthermore that he meant to be noisy in wide circles about his opinion.

Nothing else mattered. It was not Brownson's intention

to be kind to Harrison. Four years ago he had said in the *Reform*:

“As regards General Harrison, we cannot without pain think of him in connection with the presidency. We know of no claim that he has to that office. In politics we suppose he agrees with Mr. Webster; and Mr. Webster should then be supported . . . The Whigs cannot more effectually expose their cause to ridicule than by deserting him and supporting such a man as General Harrison. . . .”

And there had been no change of mind in Brownson since the writing of that quotation. It was not for the General that he risked, nay forfeited, his elegant quarters at the Chelsea Hospital. The spoils system had been “elevated to the dignity of a national principle” and there was no misunderstanding the fact that the defeat of Van Buren meant a new appointment in Brownson’s place. He was not unmindful of the obligation connoted by his office; but he had been pledged freedom, and freedom had only one definition in Brownson’s mind. He used it.

In all justice the Whigs should have returned him to his former position, for he elected their man. In taking Bancroft at his word, Brownson wrecked the Democratic Party in the national campaign and defeated the man for whom he cast his own ballot. Van Buren had had every promise of succeeding himself to the presidency. Is it any wonder that Brownson won the sincere and honest venom of all the party managers from coast to coast? Yet, the man seems utterly oblivious of the enormity of his share in the tragedy. Looking back upon the incident three years later, he tells it this way:

“Well, the canvass for president came on in 1840, and we all went into it, with the precise issue that I and my friends had wished; and we went into it with as favorable circumstances as can ever be looked

for in the history of this country, and more favorable than we can in my opinion ever look for again. We had our full share of scholars and literary men of the country; also of all that was distinguished for eminent service in practical, political life; we had the whole patronage of the legal government, and that of twenty states out of twenty-six."

Doubtless, Bancroft wondered at his own earlier pronouncement that his friend was "rooted and grounded in the true doctrine"! The school of experience now taught him an unbelievable lesson. His own prestige dropped within his party. After all, Bancroft was expected to show judgment in his appointees as well as personal loyalty to the Party; his choice of associates should have been unerring. Men who had given the matter no thought suddenly remembered that they "knew all the time that Brownson was a risk." And they asked Bancroft if he had not heard of the Working Man's Party episode. Terror charged the air.

Meanwhile, the "equal rights" essay drew upon its author the rage and vengeance of strong professional politicians, and it would have shattered without repair the spirit and reputation of any lesser character than Brownson. Theodore Parker's journal has this to say:

"Brownson has recently written an article, on the laboring classes, calculated to recall the philosophic to reflection. He thinks inherited property should be given up. . . . This makes a great noise. The Whigs finding their sacramental idea,—money,—in danger, have come to the rescue with firebrands. . . . I like much of his article, though his property notions agree not with my view."

It was not Brownson's purpose to raise such a furor. Yet he could not but know that he would deeply offend political leaders by the paper. Under the title, *The Labor-*

*ing Classes*, and occupying about thirty pages of his magazine, the discussion included such sentences as these:

"The laborer at wages has all the disadvantages of freedom and none of its blessings; while the slave, if denied the blessings, is freed from the disadvantages. For our part we are disposed to seek the cause of inequalities . . . in religion, and charge it to the priesthood. . . . Indeed, it is felt at once that no reform can be effected without resisting the priests, and emancipating the people from their power.

"As yet civilization has done little more than break and subdue man's natural love of freedom,—than tame his wild eagle spirit. In what a world does man, even now, find himself . . . ?

"The priest holds his conscience, fashion controls his tastes, and society with her forces invades the very sanctuary of his heart, and takes command of his love, that which is purest and best in his nature, which alone gives reality to his existence, and from which proceeds the only ray that pierces the gloom of his prison-house.

"Though man's first step in civilization is slavery, his last step shall be freedom. The free soul can never be wholly subdued; the ethereal fire in man's nature may be smothered, but it cannot be extinguished.

" . . . We object to everything like an outward visible church, to everything that in the remotest degree partakes of the priest.

"It may be supposed that the Protestants have no priests; but, for ourselves, we know no fundamental difference between a Catholic priest and a Protestant clergyman, as we know no difference of any magnitude, in relation to the principles on which they are based. Both, therefore, ought to go by the board."

He went on to condemn the inheritance of property as

an offense against equality. He advocated the disestablishment of banks, the banking system, corporations in general, credit, and the entire procedure of commerce as he knew it. But he did not expect the theories of his paper to be adopted. The question had been opened by the politicians of both sides. The reading public was awakened; and he could at this time rouse them to serious thought in a way that other seasons would deny:

“The rich, the business community, will never voluntarily consent to this, and we believe that we know too much of human nature to believe that it will be effected peaceably. It will come, if it ever come at all, only at the conclusion of a war, the like of which the world as yet has never witnessed, and from which, however inevitable it may seem to the eye of philosophy, the heart of humanity recoils with horror. We are not ready for this measure yet.”

The reality might never come about, but Brownson was bent upon shocking his reading public into an awareness to dangers and to a capability of translating words into thoughts. Too many persons were believing that everything, served to them with a smile, was digestible. The noise, the music, the fireworks behind the caucus and the political rally, were making sane persons dance and applaud where they should have thought and condemned. Brownson wished to humble politicians. He wished to admonish both sides that they were behaving in an unreasoned manner. He wished to warn the unsuspecting follower. He believed that public opinion could be formed toward some of what he proposed and toward a self-respecting requirement from officials of every type. But he knew that the man who would dare to project the idea would “experience a due share of contumely and abuse.” He foresaw, too, that his friend Bancroft or his party might be made to suffer from the issue. Therefore, he

appended a note to the article, and in it assumed entire responsibility for the radical character of the essay. It was his own personal project:

“I am entitled to no favor, and I ask, as I expect, none. But I am not so unfortunate as to be wholly without friends in this world. Their reputations are dear to me. For their sake, I add this note, and that they may not be in the least censured for the fact that one whom they have honored with their friendship, and in a journal which in its general character they have not hesitated to commend, has seen proper to put forth a doctrine which, to say the least, for long years to come must be condemned almost unanimously.”

The prophecy of the author as to the condemnation of the article was correct but for the word, “almost.” It was condemned unanimously. Thurlow Weed laughed as he had not laughed for ten years, and made immediate political capital of it for the Whigs. The Democrats were loud in their condemnation, lest the Whigs be credited when they declared this the general attitude of the Democrats. Of the shocked nation, those who had believed in Brownson paused in wonder; and then they went to the polls to vote Whig and to avert the revolution which the *Boston Quarterly* “advocated.” The Democratic Party had been dealt a telling blow by one of its own foremost members.

Not only did the Democratic journals condemn Brownson; but contributors to his magazine, anxious to maintain their own reputations, hesitated to appear again in his pages. They withheld their articles; and we find him alone in the preparation of his next number, of which Clarence Gohdes says:

“At the end of the third volume Brownson stated that the aid promised by his friends had been little, and that the entire number for October, 1840, had

been written by himself. He had decided to discontinue the magazine at that time; but the attacks prompted by his article on the laboring classes had aroused such discussion that he was unwilling to desert the field. He denied definite allegiance to the Democratic Party, but promised in the future to have less to do with politics. Finally he appealed to all readers who dared to look the boldest heresy in the face.'"

Then Brownson launched forth to explain his meaning and to justify his stand. The year 1841 was a busy one for him; but he was able to declare at the end of the fourth volume that his subscriptions had much increased. However, Gohdes attributes the cause of the enlarged mailing list to the gratuitous advertising of his enemies and of enemies to the Democratic Party with whom his name would ever be connected. In *The Periodicals of American Transcendentalism*, we read:

"The increased popularity of the work, it should be said, was not due to any sudden growth in the vogue of Romantic philosophy in America, but to Brownson's articles dealing with the laboring classes, which were republished by the politicians as campaign material."

Those politicians were, of course, Whigs. The Democrats were anxious enough to forget the whole matter. They would have asked the autocrat to drop the question; but they knew him to be obstinate and intractable, a never-sleeping guard for his oppressed poor. He could not be frightened or bribed. They were sure of that. Off guard, he could have been deceived; but, after he had stripped for battle, no one was brave enough to attempt the interview. They all knew that the privileged classes were constantly becoming more privileged, and that the society of America was gradually settling into the strata

of castes as distinct as those of foreign countries wherein there was made no pretense of equality among citizens. Brownson had not urged adoption of the ideas expressed; so, there was no argument on that score. And, while they thought him wrong, they could not point out the premise that led to the erroneous conclusions. They could but sit at home and suffer, as the time for each new issue approached.

The psychological cause behind such an act as the publication of the mischievous paper, in the first place, might make a theme for much conjecture. Such an article would have been bad enough at any other time; but it is difficult to find explanation other than malice, as the possible motive for the action. The apparent inconsistency of the man's voting the Democratic ticket despite the declaration in the article, could be introduced as a sign of insanity. That he should cling to his error, after the blunder was made, is not remarkable. Many a strong-minded man will do that kind of thing from motives of pride or sheer stubbornness. But what caused the initial act? Books might be written on the subject; but Brownson saves psychologists the effort of their analysis. He makes his own statement of motives:

"My political friends, as may well be believed, were indignant, if not precisely at my views, at my inopportune publication of them. I had injured my party, and defeated by my rashness the success of its candidates. They came to the conclusion that whatever my honesty, my zeal or ability, I was deficient in the essential qualities of a party leader. In this they were right, but they reasoned from wrong premises. I had my own purpose in publishing my essay on the laboring classes; and what they supposed I did from rashness, mere wantonness, I did with deliberation, with 'malice aforethought.' I have sel-

dom if ever published anything in the heat of blood, or without being well aware of what I was doing; and I must bear the full responsibility of doing it. That is, I have always acted from reason, not impulse; my reason may or may not have been a good one; but it always seemed to me a good one at the time, and generally was a good one from the position I occupied."

Is it not a cause for surprise and wondering doubt that one man, in private life, could so rock the fortunes of the mighty? A reader might smirk a challenge toward Brownson's own words and those of such others as have been quoted, but for the fact that contemporaries took him seriously. Alexander H. Everett, President of Louisiana State College, wrote on October 18, 1841 for a complete set of the *Boston Quarterly*, and adds:

"I am rather curious to see the development of your theory of government. . . . In general, we want nothing so much in this country, in a literary way, as a thorough discussion of the principles of government. . . . Libraries are published every year about men and measures, but almost nothing about principles. . . . We are looking to you for a restoration of Political Science."

On June 6, 1842, Dixon H. Lewis writes as a member of the House of Representatives. The letter is marked *Confidential*, and it carries suggestions toward the next presidential election. He mentions Woodbury as a proposed candidate for the position of Vice-president, believes that Wright is the stronger man, but not free because complicated with Van Buren. Then:

"Many look to Wright, and many look to Buchanan; but better, the friends of each are looking to us; . . . I think that we should go for Mr. Calhoun for a single

term, and select a Vice-president to whom we can stand pledged."

The letter continues with data for Brownson to touch to life,

"so that it will speak the feelings of Democrats North and South. I know no one so well qualified as yourself . . . Be kind concerning Van Buren but show him no executive. He has had one term anyway. We need a reformer,—Calhoun."

No, the only one who laughed at the 1840 debacle was Weed; and his was a laugh of triumph on two counts. He had prophesied what Brownson would do and thus won petty wagers; also, he was assured political success through proof of his penetrating insight. His judgment would be trusted by his party. True, it was not all as mysterious as it looked. Weed had been closer to the Working Man's Party than had his present associates and he knew well the "queer quirk of honesty" that determined Brownson's final decisions. He saw him as fearless, powerful and utterly independent.

Brownson remarks casually in the *Convert*:

"I had, at the persuasion of friends, given my support, such as it was, to the Democratic Party, with the hope of making that party the instrument of carrying out my views."

That statement was published in 1857 while Brownson was engaged in controversies, both political and religious. There were persons in plenty who would have used as a base for ridicule any semblance of boastful importance. The *Princeton Review* warned its clerical students against reading the book and made a faint attempt to challenge the work from the religious point of view. But no one laughed at the presumption that would dare to hope to make a national political party an instrument for the ex-

cution of Brownson's ideas. Had the hope been an ill-founded one on the part of Brownson, American humor would never have missed the swagger in that sentence. It was no idle boast.

Brownson was never discovered in an idle pose. America accepted him for what he seemed or claimed to be. Thus, he was taken seriously, when he said:

"A short experience convinced me that the hope was chimerical. I was convinced of it by the changes I detected taking place in myself. I found myself acquiring a prominent position in the Democratic Party, and in a fair way of becoming one of their trusted leaders; but in proportion as I acquired the confidence of the party, I found myself less disposed to insist on my doctrine of Social Reform. . . . Let me go as I am going a little longer, and I shall forget all my early purposes, abandon the work to which I have consecrated my life, . . . involved in the meshes of the party . . . that I can no longer be free . . . without compromising my friends, my party, and perhaps myself. . . . I shall be free to act as I think proper, unshackled by party obligations, or even personal friendships."

Such sentences are worthy of Augustine. This is the third time that Brownson has declared a fear, within his better self, because he detected in his own nature the general human propensity to seek human admiration. He had hesitated, when a young man, to publish a creed which he had composed because he might become more wedded to his creed than to his God. He had broken with the leaders, Owen and Wright, ten years previously when they tried to fetter his wrists with wealth and flattering power. And, now, when he had found the Chelsea leisure and salary so comfortable that he was "less disposed to

insist" on his doctrine of Social Reform, he freed himself again.

Few men recognize that type of danger in themselves. It is like growing round-shouldered: the calamity comes on so gradually that it is difficult of observation in one's self. Then the bones set; and recovery to erect stature is a painful process. That power of self-criticism, with the same lack of prejudice as in neighbor-criticism, is a quality worthy of remark. Brownson's attitude toward a known weakness detected in himself was a very literal application of the counsel of the Gospel:

"And if thy hand or thy foot scandalize thee, cut it off, and cast it from thee. It is better for thee to go into life maimed or lame, than having two hands and two feet, to be cast into everlasting fire."

This influence of Brownson's judgment over his own weaker self is not the least of his conquests. The consistent philosopher ruled the egoist within him in the active determination to remain free at the possible price of fame, political power, and personal friends. Brownson was consistent; he could not point out slavery, wherever it existed outside of himself, and be blind to the sale of his own liberty. He shook from himself, in the painful consequences of *The Essay on the Laboring Classes*, his second set of political shackles. He was finished, now, with politics, but unwilling to relinquish the respect that the public had held for him. Without their respect and esteem, his influence was broken. He knew that he was the most sincere sponsor of the working man. His efforts must not be rendered impotent. He must retain his followers.

Having settled that fact in his mind, Brownson determined to win back, first, such friends as had paused to weigh, and re-evaluate his worth. To this end he defended his essay in the next issue of the *Boston Quarterly Review*:

"When I published my essay, I supposed it would close my literary as well as my political career. But the manner in which I was assailed aroused for a moment my indignation, and made me resolve . . . to regain the position I had lost. . . . In the three years that followed I gained more than I had lost, and I never stood higher, commanded more of the public attention, or had a more promising career open before me than at the moment when I avowed my conversion to Catholicity."

But the narration is moving a step beyond the time when it relates the fact of his conversion. In 1840, that event was four years in the future. Meanwhile, the political leaders of the whole nation were watching him. The managers of the Democratic Party in and about Boston reproached themselves bitterly for having let him slip through their fingers.

Midway in the time before the next campaign, a little scheme was launched. Brownson was too important a man to remain an unallied force. They must make up with him. The Whigs must not be allowed to claim the greatest pen in America. The Democrats must recapture him. But he must not be again permitted a free hand at the crucial time of election. One more brainstorm from that man, and the Democratic Party was finished.

The regular leaders had been accused of sheer stupidity and criminal carelessness in permitting a person of the caliber of Brownson to remain unhampered at campaign time. They were chagrined at having forgotten his history in connection with the Working Man's Party. They were enraged at Weed's glee, at the opportunism with which he again swept the fragments of a party into his own organization. This thing was a science; and they had been proceeding casually.

Everyone had recognized Brownson as a power. It

was nothing to their credit that they also valued him thus. They should have seen past the usual conclusion and should have observed that he was also a danger. The rebuke was deserved, and they accepted it. They were aware now that he was both a danger and a power. They needed his strength; they needed protection from what they persisted in believing was his impulse. They must find a way to capture him and to make him their own.

Such resolve was more easily formed than executed. That the giant would submit to editorial supervision was too much to hope. No one dared propose such an idea. But they could gain at least an advantage that was worth much if they could make him a free-speech contributor to a magazine of their management. They would not dare to hamper his pen; but they would have foreknowledge of the entire matter in his published articles. That would be something. And the press could burn to the ground from unknown causes rather than that another *Essay on the Laboring Classes* should reach the public.

There was one magazine that had made a success of "The admixture of politics and literature." It was five years old in 1842, and possessed as its editor the most tactful Irishman in the world. John L. O'Sullivan could bow very low. There were those who insisted that he could stoop even lower; but he got his own way in most cases, and he was willing to attempt the capture of the greatest independent of nineteenth-century America.

The story of that contest is an interesting one. Mr. O'Sullivan saw within the personality of Brownson obstacles enough; but that was not all. O'Sullivan's magazine was the *United States Magazine and Democratic Review*. It was commonly known as only the *Democratic Review*; and it was the magazine that had been Brownson's chief target for two constant years. Furthermore, O'Sullivan's

"mights and rights" essay had touched off the *Laboring Classes* explosion.

From that position, the bland editor had promised his party to come back with Brownson on leash. And he fulfilled his promise. But those who had placed themselves on the other side of the wager were not losers. The capture was of a temporary nature, and O'Sullivan learned that a lion on leash is in no sense a caged animal. It was not long a matter of conjecture which end of the rope was governing the route of travel.

The bait for capture was set in May, 1842. Brownson received a very genial letter from a gentleman who craved to know whether the editor would consider merging his magazine with another having a like motive for existence:

"The idea has occurred to me that perhaps a mutually satisfactory arrangement might be made between us respecting the future publications of the two works edited by us respectively, for the promotion of the great and holy cause of our common principles. . . . It strikes me that your admirable *Review* might be advantageously merged into the *Democratic Review*."

By July, there was an offer for three dollars per page for all articles. In August, there was a cheerful agreement that Brownson's freedom would be in no way compromised. He might express what he would, as he would. There followed the request for Brownson's picture. O'Sullivan would so like to "use your photograph to introduce you to our subscribers." Now, Brownson was human; and the first joint issue of the *Democratic Review* and the *Boston Review* was an accomplished fact by October, 1843.

The Dorr Rebellion was on in Rhode Island; and all the neighboring states were vitally interested in the out-

come. Brownson had known Dorr personally; and there were many things to be said for the man. Few persons were saying them aloud after Dorr had received prison sentence; but Brownson's opinions were always public.

The first issue of the magazines merged "for the promotion of the great and holy cause" of O'Sullivan and Brownson brought difference of judgment. The editor "wouldn't interfere with your freedom, but would certainly prefer any other subject to yours on the Rhode Island matter."

The reproof came as a real surprise to Brownson; but the full import of it did not reach him until later. Brilliant intellect that he was, he had to learn, at the age of thirty-nine, that a man is really at home only in his own house. O'Sullivan informed Brownson that the subscribers of the *Democratic Review* were not of controversial tastes; and their desires must be considered. The editor's letters became of a type quite different from the genial flattering ones of the spring and summer months. After the February issue, he wrote:

"The proportion of those who were pleased with the papers on *Synthetic Philosophy* seems to our observation, here, very small . . . 'The greatest entertainment of the greatest number,' to vary the Benthamic formula,—becomes at this time in particular the consideration of the highest moment."

Brownson had published no humor, as such; but the lion certainly sat back on his haunches and smiled as he contemplated the reaction of the editorial office to his next article. Philosophy was unwelcome; the Dorr paper was not among those preferred. He would shift the subject to the political field. Certainly that quality of matter should interest the readers of the *Democratic Review*. And so it came to pass that, in the April number of the

merged paper, an article was entitled, *Democracy and Liberty*. It began:

“Our Democratic brethren are upon the whole a fine set of fellows . . . with great good humor; otherwise we should expect to lose our ears, if not our heads, for the many severe things we intend in the course of our essay to say to them and about them. We shall try them severely; for we intend to run athwart many of their fondly cherished prejudices, and to controvert not a few of their favorite axioms; but we trust they will be able to survive the trial, and to come forth as pure and bright as they have from that which the Whigs gave them in 1840.

“Mentioning this 1840, we must say that it marks an epoch in *our* political and social doctrines. The famous election of that year wrought a greater revolution in us than in the government; and we confess, here on the threshold, that since we have pretty much ceased to speak of, or to confide in, the ‘intelligence of the people.’ . . .”

O’Sullivan, reading the galley proofs, could not believe his eyes. If he had flattered himself on his conquest, he was now certain that the issue was more than unsatisfactory. He read on:

“An instructive year, that 1840, to all who have sense enough to read it right. What happened then may happen again . . . We for one frankly confess,—and we care not who knows it,—that what we saw during the presidential election of 1840, shook, nay, gave to the winds, all our remaining confidence in the popular democratic doctrines—not measures—of the day; and we confess furthermore, that we have seen nothing in the conduct of either party since, that has tended to restore it. . . . The . . . successes . . . in state elections seem to have intox-

cated the whole Democratic Party, and unless God sends us some sudden and severe rebuke, there is great danger that we shall go into power again in 1845, without having been in the least instructed by defeat, or purified by adversity. . . .”

The essay was twenty-three pages long. There was no choice in the pages: one was as bad as another. Furthermore, O’Sullivan was under contract to delete nothing, and to pay \$3.00 per page to Brownson. Hawthorne could get no such sum for his agreeable articles in the same magazine. Mrs. Hawthorne wrote a friend at this time complaining of their ill fortune:

“The *Democratic Review* is so poor now that it can only offer twenty dollars for an article of what length so ever; so that Mr. Hawthorne cannot well afford to give any but short stories to it.”

In the May number of the *Democratic Review*, the April article is continued with the following introduction:

“The editor of the *Democratic Review* appended a ‘Note’ to my article on *Democracy and Liberty* inserted in this journal for April last. I am glad that he did, because it shows that he considered the question I raised to be of no slight importance, and because by so doing he will draw more attention to my statements, and thus further the purpose for which they were made. I must ask him without making any claims upon the ‘special agreement’ there may be between us, to suffer me to offer through his pages a few comments and explanations in justification of the doctrine I sought to bring out and establish. It is too early, I hope, by many years, for my friends to take up lamentations over my fall; and especially quite too early to build my tomb, and write my epitaph.”

Then the author answered for his thesis in a defense which is metallic in its resonance from the printed page. In that article, Brownson traced briefly in retrospect his political activities from his first vote to the disastrous campaign of 1840:

"In 1824, during the canvass of that year for President, I was in the then territory of Michigan, and of course had no right to vote; but my sympathies during that campaign were for Mr. Calhoun; but when I learned that he would be a candidate for the Vice-Presidency and not for the Presidency, I was for Mr. Crawford. . . . The year following, and through 1830, I was one of those who helped get up and sustain in the State of New York, what was called the Working Man's Party; . . .

"The wickedness of the banks in 1837, . . . brought me for the first time fairly into practical politics; for I felt that a system of special legislation . . . if not arrested, would bring us under the absolute control of associated wealth; and seeing . . . that the Democratic Party . . . must from the circumstances in which it was placed, adopt, on the one hand the State Rights doctrine of the South, . . . and on the other accept the *loco foco* doctrines concerning banks and banking, privilege, monopoly and equal rights, I felt I ought to cease my opposition. . . .

"During the whole of the period from the foundation of the Working Man's Party down to 1840, I had felt and acted on the policy of making up as distinctly as possible before the country, the direct issue, as Mr. Benton expressed it, between MAN AND MONEY. The real question was between the interests of the associated or corporate wealth; or more strictly perhaps of business, on the one hand,

and the interests of labor, agriculture, mechanics, etc., on the other. . . . Hence, I struggled as earnestly as I could, and perhaps not without some effect, to make up the issue, directly on this ground. . . .

“We all knew what measures the Whigs would attempt to carry if they prevailed; and we, the writers, essayists, declaimers, orators, lecturers, etc., in our addresses to the people, distinctly stated what these measures were; and opposed the Whigs on the ground of their unconstitutionality and wickedness.”

But through his experiences in 1840 he learned more:

“. . . that if we make up the issue, . . . between MAN AND MONEY we necessarily bring about a horizontal division of parties, in which the party of money will always carry the day. The history of the world offers no instance in which, with man on one side, and money on the other, money has not triumphed. . . .

“Instead of separating the interests of wealth from the interests of man, the interests of business from those of labor; we must study so to unite them that the partisans of wealth, in promoting their own interests, shall continue to promote the equal rights, and equal chances, for which we as true democrats are struggling. This much, I for one learned from the results of the campaign of 1840. . . . I saw that while we were preaching our social doctrines and dreaming, by conviction and moral suasion, to bring back the long-lost Eden, the partisans of privilege, monopoly, special legislation, would possess themselves of the government, and fasten a system of measures upon the country, which would for a long series of years, if not forever, render impotent our efforts. . . .”

Mr. O'Sullivan paced the floor. In politics, even more than in other business, success was demanded. A man did not "try." At the end of every campaign, there were literally thousands who had filled places of relative importance as political helpers, who were never heard of again. They were brushed away as waste, and their places were filled by fresh, ambitious, if equally cheap, material. After every rally, barrels of crumpled paper, banners and streamers that had served for a night were swept into piles, and tossed aside. O'Sullivan had wished to be considered a part of the permanent paraphernalia of the party. He could not be considered a profound man. He knew that. But he was a quick thinker; and he was smooth of speech.

That much had got him his prey. He wished now that he had been neither quick nor smooth. Surely, another such man, perverse as Brownson, had never walked the earth. And this was a matter of single combat. He had volunteered to the position that he occupied. He thought that he had taken every precaution. He had tied up the publisher and the editor so that the *Boston Quarterly* might never be revived. Even that looked like a mistake now. It were better have the man out, and acting as he would, where he would. Then, the Party might disclaim all connection with him.

The previous issue had brought him unwelcome interviews; and letters, that said little and expressed much, had come in from corporation lawyers. He had to get rid of his partner but he could not force him out. The contract compelled prudence in the matter. And, if the journalist were approached on the subject, he would tell the world about it, and stay on. O'Sullivan must continue to make Brownson willing to withdraw of his own accord. To that end he appended a series of notes disapproving Brownson's articles. In August, for instance, an asterisk

was placed beside the title, *Origin and Ground of Government*; and a footnote carried the following legend:

“It is perhaps scarcely necessary to remark, that many of the views stated in this article, with the usual ability of its author, differ widely from those for which the editor of this *Review* is willing that it should be held responsible.—Ed. D. R.”

Brownson ignored the presence of the note. The second section of the *Origin* was longer by two or three pages than the first had been. Mr. O’Sullivan’s comment, this time was also longer:

“As Mr. Brownson reserves the complete development of his views on this subject to a third and closing Article, we are also compelled to postpone the remarks they appear to call for from the *Democratic Review*. In the meantime, we take this mode of noticing, generally, the numerous letters from correspondents and subscribers complaining of the admission into the pages of this work of papers containing the sentiments which have characterized some of Mr. Brownson’s contributions. In the number for last April in the Editorial Note to one of these papers, the nature of the peculiar connection subsisting between that able and distinguished gentleman and this work, was stated with sufficient distinctness, as it seemed, to preclude the necessity of any recurrence to it; nor did we suppose it possible that so many could continue to hold the *Review* responsible for views so widely diverse from those which have been, on many occasions, amply stated by it. To those who have seen fit to testify their displeasure at our correspondent’s heresies by the withdrawal of their subscriptions, while parting from them with perfect cheerfulness, we take the liberty

of suggesting that possibly there may be some mutuality in the loss, and were the number of such tenfold more considerable, it could not affect our completion of an engagement with a respected and esteemed correspondent, resting on a basis of good faith, with which no consideration of expediency can, of course, come into comparison.—Ed. D. R.”

Brownson's final article covered twenty-five pages. (Mr. O'Sullivan had to pay seventy-five dollars for it.) In conclusion, Brownson thanked the editor for permitting him to express through his journal, “opinions so widely diverse from his own,” and declared that he had been impelled by a sense of duty to give utterance to his deepest convictions for the good of the public. He said in fine:

“Perhaps the day will come, when the very men who now testify their displeasure at my speculations, will own that I have spoken a true word, and spoken it seasonably. At any rate, I have aimed to do my duty, and shall wait cheerfully the result.”

A note was again appended, carrying the threat of a reply in the next issue, since “We have no space at command, for the purpose, in the present number, it will be attempted in the next.—Ed. D. R.”

The November number asserts that the reply to Mr. Brownson's recent article is again crowded out. In the December issue eight pages are devoted to a statement of the contract under which the *Boston Quarterly* and the *Democratic Review* were merged. There follows an attempt to reduce Brownson's doctrine of government to a simple formula. Once more, “We have not room. . . . We find ourselves again impelled to postpone. . . .”

No logical reply to Brownson's articles was attempted. They were presented as though the whole matter were worthy of nothing better than contempt:

"Upon our own institutions, or our own politics, they have but a slight practical bearing. So far as regards us and ours, they may be set down as little more than imaginary abstractions, though in application to affairs of other nations they would be, indeed, at every page, rife with fatalest mischief to the cause of popular liberty and rights. . . .

"All the world is not wrong, he alone being right, when all the world unites in exclaiming upon his sudden and total change of position,—. . . the unstable vagaries of a vain and restless mind, impatient of repose, insatiable of notoriety, of excitement, of the special wonderment of the public attention . . . Far from us thus to characterize the meaning of Mr. Brownson's recent—we will not say desertion—we will not say apostasy—we will say, of his recent unfortunate transfer of his Stentor voice and his Ajax arm from our camp, the camp of the People, . . . Far from us, we say, be this unkindness, this injustice."

This reads like an echo of the speech of Mark Anthony,—" . . . but Brutus is an honorable man." The picture is utterly untrue. It was never the ambition of Brownson to sway the multitude. It was his conviction, expressed repeatedly, that the man who would sway crowds must temper his thoughts to speak superficially. To be understood by all, one must evade depths of reasoning. It was his preference to influence, deeply, a narrow circle of zealots. These would, in turn, kindle other minds: each again influencing a few:

"He who can speak out the profoundest truths to the apprehension of five hundred of the best minds of the country, speaks, after all, to a much larger audience than he who speaks only to the multitude. They who make it their boast that they speak to the

many, do after all speak only to the few; and what they speak is not worth speaking. Because it is not in advance of what is already realized. Each of these five hundred leading minds to whom I speak, speaks to five hundred more; and, thus, through them I actually speak to two hundred and fifty thousand. Which two hundred and fifty thousand continue to echo my voice till it reaches the mass of my countrymen,—the mass of mankind. . . . Let us then cease our adulation of the mass, to gauge the amount of truth we can tell, by the amount the multitude can take in, cease our insane efforts to adapt everything to the apprehension of the mass; and do our best to gain all truth, to nourish and invigorate us for wisely directed, and long continued efforts for the elevation of all men."

There is Brownson's standard of influence. And who will measure the depth, or the width, or the duration of the influence of a man who for forty-five years stood before the gaze of the public, uttering profound truths? Who will measure the influence of the example of a man who walked through life in a straight line toward the goal of truth, once he was assured of its being? Whether lionized, or just a plain lion, he labored to know the right and to do it.

With small minds in high places he had little patience; and this irritation was sensed and resented by certain incumbents. But Brownson was recognized, always and everywhere, as an honest, fearless man of exceptional mind. His strong faith was extraordinary in that the Divinity for whom he searched for years was literally an unknown God; yet for principle the man sacrificed position and condition. Brownson, because of his unswerving principle, held the secret respect of admiring friend and of fearful foe. His power lives on where his name is forgotten.

## CHAPTER X

### The Convert

WHEN Brownson finally left the *Democratic Review*, he had to look about for another new beginning. He might not reopen the *Boston Quarterly*, for his agreement with O'Sullivan forbade the re-establishment of that magazine. He was almost without plans. Yet it was with no sense of defeat that he left his captor. He had delivered to that bland politician the most complete trouncing that it had ever been his pleasure to administer. The blows had been metaphorical ones; but the reaction had been physical. The strain told on O'Sullivan; and Brownson knew that he was mopping his rounded brow in the relief of exhaustion, as it all ended.

He knew, too, that his recalled followers were watching his course to determine their own. Men who had walked with him until 1830 and had lost him after the collapse of the Working Man's Party, would have no further interest now in the *Democratic Review*. Brownson must find a mouthpiece for political utterances. He had lately taken on part-editorship of the *Christian World*, and had nearly completed a series of essays on *The Mission of Jesus*; but the editor-in-chief refused to publish the eighth and last instalment, declaring that it was as Catholic as Rome itself.

The trend of the set was certainly in that direction; but Brownson hesitated, and could not bring himself to declare the Roman Catholic Church right. Neither could he make himself affirm that the whole Protestant Movement was wrong. He says:

. . . "I had formed but a poor opinion of Roman Catholics, and was far from being willing to cast my lot with them. . . . One or two modern Catholic controversial works had fallen in my way, and I had attempted to read them, but they did not impress me favorably. They were written, I thought, in a dry, feeble, and unattractive style, and abounded with terms and locutions which were to me totally unintelligible. . . .

"Then I had been accustomed to regard the Catholic nations of Europe, since the time of Leo X, as unprogressive. . . . I found Catholics, I thought, at the head of none of the great intellectual, political, social, literary, or scientific movements of the age. The great, energetic nations of the day were the non-Catholic nations, Great Britain, Russia, and the United States. . . . In every Catholic state, power, learning, science, energy, is in the hands of non-Catholics, and the Catholic portion, though in the immense majority, are governed by the non-Catholic minority. . . .

"Nor was this all. To pass from one Protestant sect to another is a small affair, and is little more than going from one apartment to another in the same house. We remain in the same world, in the same general order of thought, and in the midst of the same friends and associates. We do not go from the known to the unknown; we are still within soundings, and may either return, if we choose, to the sect we have left, or press on to another, without serious loss of reputation, or any gross disturbance in our domestic or social relations.

"But to pass from Protestantism to Catholicism is a very different thing. We break with the whole world with which we have thitherto lived; we enter into what is to us a new and untried region, and we fear

the discoveries we may make there, when it is too late to draw back. To the Protestant mind, this old Catholic Church is veiled in mystery, and leaves ample room to the imagination to people it with all manner of monsters, chimeras, and hydras dire. . . . To enter it seemed to me like taking a leap in the dark; and it is not strange that I recoiled, and set my wits to work to find out, if possible, some compromise, some middle ground, on which I could be faithful to my Catholic tendencies without uniting myself with the present Roman Catholic Church.

. . . “I had long been convinced that the Church in communion with the see of Rome had been the true body of Christ down to the age of Leo X, and I regarded the Apostolic See as the central source of the Christian life; but the body seemed to me to have broken into fragments, and to exist no longer in its integrity. The Roman Catholic Church was undoubtedly the largest fragment, . . . I had found no Catholic that held that there could be absolutely no salvation outside it. . . . Undoubtedly they who are attached to the Roman Catholic fragment have the advantage; but we should labor . . . to effect in the surest and speediest manner possible the reunion of all the fragments, and thus restore the body of Christ to its original unity and integrity.”

That extreme conclusion was too ultra for the *Christian World*. It became clear that in neither politics nor religion, then, could the crusader be satisfied as a subordinate. He talked his new difficulties over with Mr. Greene, his old publisher. Greene agreed with Sally that Orestes had enough to say to fill a magazine under his own name, that he was not representative of any sect or city, and that he would not fit under the banner of any party. He was Brownson; and there had grown a Brown-

sonian bloc that would be proud to read their idol in *Brownson's Quarterly Review*.

The magazine was established in January, 1844. Its editor was forty-one, still slender, erect, and swift of movement. But a special loneliness marked him. Not alone because Orestes Jr., now aged fifteen, had rebelled at Brook Farm, and chosen life on the sea, but because he himself had suffered estrangement so many times; and he foresaw a greater breach between himself and his friends than any he had yet known. Like steel to lode-stone, Brownson was drawn to mystery, and the presence of a lofty ideal within a great cause. A torturing, secret unrest impelled the hungering searcher, almost against his own will. Like a passion, it directed his unceasing search. He ignored repeated disappointments, and believed that dreams were made of the stuff of life.

He was always charging, always active, always seeking rest, and always disturbing the tranquility of others. In the first number of the *Brownson* he saluted his former subscribers of the *Boston Quarterly Review* and of the *Democratic Review*, thus:

“We meet again, dear friends, after a short separation, and I trust unchanged. You may have heard strange rumors of me, but I come back as I was. The heart may be sadder, and less buoyant; but it beats still for the same great moral and social end, and retains all its own faith in God, in Christ, and human capacity. Believe none of the idle rumors which may have reached your ears. As you have known me, so will you always find me. You have known me too long and too intimately to give in to the false notion that I am constantly changing my opinions. They who have not known me formerly, as ye knew me, and who gathered my views from isolated extracts . . . beginning now to understand,

really, somewhat of my doctrines and purposes may very well fancy that I have changed; because they do not upon a better acquaintance, find me what they had figured me to themselves, . . . but sentiments with which they now approve, and suppose I have but recently come to entertain."

It is necessary to include this rather long quotation because the opinion of change persists in Brownson's reputation. Lowell placed him in the *Fable for Critics*, a little later in this light:

"Close behind him, [Emerson], is Brownson, his  
mouth very full  
With attempting to gulp a Gregorian Bull;  
Who contrived, spite of that, to pour out as he goes  
A stream of transparent and forcible prose;  
He shifts quite about; then proceeds to expound  
That 'tis merely the earth, not himself, that turns  
round;  
And wishes it clearly impressed on your mind,  
That the weather-cock rules, and not follows, the  
wind;  
Proving first, then as deftly confuting each side,  
With no doctrine pleased, that's not somewhere  
denied;  
He lays the denier away on the shelf,  
And then down beside him lies gravely himself."

Lowell refers further to Brownson's habit of making conversation with any who rode on the same boat with him across the ferry between Boston and Chelsea:

"He's the Salt River boatman who always stands  
willing,  
To convey friend or foe without charging a shilling;  
And so fond of the trip that, when leisure's to spare  
He'll row himself up, if he can't get a fare.

The worst of it is that his logic's so strong  
That, of two sides, he commonly chooses the wrong;  
If there is only one, why he'll split it in two,  
And first pummel this half, then that, black and blue.  
That white's white needs no proof; but it takes a  
deep fellow  
To prove it jet black, and that jet black is yellow.  
He offers the true faith to drink in a sieve;  
When it reaches your lips, there's naught left to  
believe  
But a few silly (syllo, I mean) gisms that squat 'em  
Like tadpoles, o'er joyed with mud, at the bottom."

Brownson's defense continues:

"Yes, I deny that I have *changed*, though I own  
that I seem to myself to have *advanced*. I am look-  
ing the same way, and have continued on in the  
same direction; but I believe that I am further along  
than I was. . . . My views have, in general, become  
more fully developed and systematized; I seem to  
myself to understand myself better, . . . The young  
dreamer, the visionary speculator, let me hope, has  
ripened into the sober, practical man. . . . I bring  
to this new periodical, the same love of inde-  
pendence, the same free thought and free speech,  
the same unreserved devotion to liberty, the same  
unquenchable desire for individual and social pro-  
gress, and the same power to live or to die for it,  
that made me so many enemies, and so many friends,  
in the *Boston Quarterly Review*.

" . . . This is my *Review*; I am its proprietor; its  
editor; intend to be its principal, if not its sole  
writer, and to make it the organ of my own views  
of truth, on all the great or little topics, on which I  
shall judge it worth my while to discourse. It may  
support, and oppose, first one existing party, sect,

or school, and then another. . . . All . . . must be free . . . to accept what they like, and to reject what they dislike; to praise me when they please, to scold me to their heart's content."

Then Brownson goes back to trace his growth from zero, where he found himself in 1829, to 1838 when,

"I believed that I was a believer. But there were weighty problems remaining unsolved. . . . I have finally got rid of all naturalistic and pantheistic tendencies."

He says nothing of the pull of Catholicism that he has thus far resisted; but he makes a lengthy declaration of creed, and offers reproach to the Church:

"The Church has failed to assert . . . her absolute independence, which is essential to the successful accomplishment of her mission . . . She has, on the one hand yielded too much to the doctors, who would confine her to ancient tradition, and to primitive usage; and, on the other, . . . too much to civil authority,—suffering the civil ruler to invade her province, and by his edicts, to restrain her free action and independent development. . . . I dare affirm that her error, or the cause of her not having more completely succeeded, is not in the arrogance of her pretensions, but in the extreme modesty of her claims; not in asserting, but in *not* asserting, her independence in regard to tradition, written or unwritten, and in the face of civil authority. . . .

"But if the Church herself neglected to assert, or but too feebly and timidly asserted, her independence in the face of the State, and especially of Antiquity, this was much more the case with the philosophers and free thinkers in her bosom. These seem to have no conception of her independence, of her right

and ability, to accept all new views, or new applications of truth; and so, whenever they attained to a new view, or discovered a new application of truth; instead of seeking to bring it out in harmony with the teachings of the Church, or showing how it was necessarily evolved from her admitted principles, and authorized by the analogies of faith, they brought it out independently, in opposition to her express dogmas, so that she must needs reject it or prove suicidal.

"But in rejecting it she became, practically, the enemy of free thought and free speech, and therefore tyrannical and oppressive. Hence the war which has so long been waged between the Church on one side, and the philosophers and free-inquirers on the other,—a war not necessary in the nature of things, but caused by the failure of the Church to assert her own independence, and of these philosophers . . . to perceive that the successful assertion of this independence would be the successful assertion of religious and philosophical freedom.

"The evil, resulting from this misapprehension—shared in some degree by the Church herself—. . . has been great and manifold; but it is not irremediable. . . . There is ample provision for the largest liberty of thought and speech, and the authority of the Church remains standing in all its plenitude and vigor. There is full scope for the boldest inquiries and the most unreserved utterance, provided only that the inquirers take care, before giving utterance to their speculations, to examine them in their relation to the principle on which the Church is founded, and then to set them forth in their harmony with those principles. . . . The only restraint there is, or can be, in this case, is merely a restraint on hasty

judgments . . . which would by no means be a mischievous restraint, but . . . one very much needed.

“But my readers must not misinterpret me. There is no truth in the report that I have joined or am intending to join the Roman Catholic Church. I am free to confess that I accept the general theory of that Church as the true theory of the Church of Christ; but that theory itself prevents me, *in the present state of the religious world*, from seeking to unite myself to the Roman Catholic communion. . . .

“If the Roman communion does what she may, . . . assert the two-fold independence of which I speak, she will become the nucleus of a reorganization, and ultimately absorb all other communions into herself; . . . because the vital principle, the organic force of the Church, is the *indwelling life or Spirit of Christ*.

“Now, I look forward to this re-organization of the Christian world, . . . not far distant, when the Church will . . . become really one and Catholic; her spirit one; faith one; discipline one; and for this without conferring with flesh and blood, I pray and labor, *from the very position where God in His Providence has placed me*. Let all others do the same, and gradually but effectually will spring up a unity of spirit which will induce unity of faith. . . . unity of organization and discipline. . . . To speak technically, I am neither Protestant nor Romanist. . . . I look upon Protestantism as a blunder, and as having proved a decided failure. . . . In laboring for the rehabilitation of the Church, and for the union of all men . . . we must accept and obey the *Law of Continuity*.

“The Present and the Future must always be regarded as intimately linked with and evolved from the Past. . . . For myself, I have learned to rever-

ence the past; and I see nothing for me, nor for anyone, to do but to labor to carry onward the work humanity has commenced and, thus far, not unsuccessfully prosecuted. Man was not a blunder, and his creation has not proved a failure. . . . No efforts to create an entirely new order, instead of carrying forward, to its perfection the old, can be wisely or safely countenanced. Humanity is a mighty river . . . flowing on ever with a constant, increasing volume, in the same direction, from out of the infinite abyss, to its unknown ocean; and whatever would interrupt its on-flowing, or divert its course, is evil, and only evil. . . .

"I accept the Church as the Body of our Lord, as the divinely appointed medium of individual and social regeneration and progress. . . . In this I shall have for enemies the worldly wise, the selfish, the unbelieving, and the indifferent. . . . But I shall not be alone; I shall be only one of the still mightier army of the faithful, and shall be encouraged by the saints and the martyrs of all ages, whose prayers I dare invoke, and dare believe will be effectual with the Great Head of the Church, to whose service I have been consecrated, and to which I would consecrate myself anew, and without reserve. . . .

"In His name which is above every name, I send forth this humble work . . . It calls, in the name of Christ the Crucified, of Christ the Risen, of Christ the Ever-present, of Christ the Almighty, the human race to the Religious Future. May God give energy and success to the call, and His be the praise and the glory. . . ."

There was much comment upon Brownson's leaning toward the Catholic Church: some consternation from persons who had been reared in hostility to the Church in so far as they knew anything of it; an enthusiastic

salute from the army scattered in the swamp of despond, after losing the sound of their general's voice for a time; hope in the thinking Catholics who had followed the trend of Brownson's lectures through the winter of 1842-1843. The subject of those discourses had been the *Catholic Church of the Middle Ages*. Some churchmen had dared to hope that the great leader was on the way to Rome. Others feared that he would but "kick up a rumpus and leave again," if he did.

But the lectures grew so popular as to inspire Archbishop Hughes to follow Brownson's example. If a Protestant minister could command large audiences on a subject such as that, why should a Catholic bishop leave a bushel over the light? Now, in the winter of 1844, Hughes lectured before societies of Baltimore and Philadelphia on the *Importance of a Christian Basis for the Science of Political Economy*. Brownson heard one of his discourses, and he was impressed favorably toward the Bishop.

James Freeman Clarke, the Unitarian minister back in Boston from Louisville in 1836, had been astonished at the "state of fermentation" he found among his friends and "new ideas flying high and low." He had more to say now, eight years after, when old ideas, very old ideas, were out-flying the new. There were anxious glances exchanged at Brook Farm. Parker, who had bought Ripley's library at a bargain to supply ready money, touched the books lovingly: "Brownson is slipping," said he, "and without his moral support the Farm will be deserted in another three years. It will be tragedy if Ripley wants these back for what I paid for them." Spiritual currents were in rapid crisscross.

A letter from Philadelphia reached Brownson. He did not recognize the hand; but he paid the postage, slipped the blade of his pocket knife under the sealing dab of wax, and sought the signature. There was none. And there was no date of composition, or address of the sender; but

the postmark was Philadelphia, January 10. That much ascertained, Brownson applied himself to reading the manuscript.

The first paragraph was highly complimentary. Brownson's power for good or evil beyond most men . . . fearless heart . . . trumpet-toned tongue . . . truth. . . . But the writer had discovered errors, and was willing to point out their causes. So! This was challenge. Brownson's squint eyes smiled, and he sought a chair near a cuspidor. This letter was what he had hoped for. He loved contests, and had never been able to satisfy indulgence in them. His opponents always fled after a brief experience of his strength. It had been so with the boyhood wrestlers, with neighboring ministers, with political allies; and this correspondent was in hiding before the battle began. Well, if it proved worthy of an answer, the editor could reach him. He read on:

“How can *you*, who so powerfully appeal to the ‘*fact* of eighteen hundred years,’ set aside the *historical* view by which alone you get at that fact? *History* teaches you . . . that the Church of God *is* and *has been* through eighteen centuries. To history I appeal to show *what* it *is*, . . . and *where it has been*. . . . The *inner life* of the Church no history can touch—it is a thing of *experience* and experience only. But the organized life of the one Body has been seen, heard, looked upon, and handled, from the day of the Apostles until now. . . .

“Your theory of *development* is wrong. Most truly you assert a *continuous inspiration*. But of what kind? of addition? No; but of *living breath*, of *vocal utterance*, of *articulate expression* of the one, unchangeable, changeless, Eternal Word. God changes not. Man changes not. The world changes not. Its phases are phases only. . . .

“Go on, Sir, in your outspoken zeal; but beware of

speaking without searching further. . . . Believe all you do of the Church's *life*, and *work*; but neglect not her *organization*. . . ."

Brownson was impatient with the writer's having missed the point in his essay. He would have preferred answering the man in a personal letter; but he does the one thing left him to do. Under title, *Nature and Office of the Church*, he addressed his anonymous correspondent in the April issue of the *Brownson Quarterly*. But he offered the admonition: "Should the writer address us again, we hope he will give us his name, for he wants not the capacity to render it honorable, be it what it may."

Brownson explains:

"In our introduction, we were addressing ourselves to our old friends . . . to show them that entire submission to the Church . . . demands no surrender of individual freedom of thought or conscience. . . . We raised the question of the *Nature and Office of the Church*, stated it to be the paramount question of the day; but we did not undertake to answer it. . . . Our real purpose was to show, 1. That, throughout Christendom, there is a strong tendency to return to the unity and catholicity of the Church; 2. That to effect this return, it is necessary to take up the great question of the Church itself; 3. That this question may be taken up and discussed in the freest and fullest manner, in any and all of our professedly Christian communions; 4. That the answer, the germs of which each sect may find in its present faith, . . . once obtained, all particular communions will be destroyed, by being absorbed in the Catholic Communion. . . .

"Supposing we understood ourselves, and were not merely sporting with our readers, we must have implied what indeed we stated: 1. That men have

broken away from the Church because they have lost the sense of its profound significance; and, 2. That the recovery of this sense, that is, the full understanding of the true nature and office of the Church, will bring them back to the one Catholic Communion, because the moment they come to perceive . . . they must perceive that a Church not one and Catholic, can be no Church at all. Does this imply ignorance of the *nature* and *office* of the Church on our part? . . .

"Our inquiry was not, How may the Church recover its unity and catholicity? but, How may professedly Christian communions find their way back to the one Catholic Church? The Church has never lost its unity and catholicity, for it cannot lose them without ceasing to be the Church of God. . . . The reform we demand is never of the institution, but of the individuals. We believe in no Church that can ever need reforming.

"We do not overlook the Church as an *organization*, for the Church in any other sense, is to us no Church at all. The Church is an organic body, . . . under one visible as well as invisible Head, with one common center of life, out from which through communion, flows the life to all its members. We may indeed recognize . . . the grand communion of Saints; but this is not what we mean by the Catholic Church. The Catholic Church is a divinely instituted body to prepare us for admission into this glorious company of saints. Like the Gospel net it gathers all, both good and bad; for we come into it, not because we are sanctified; but that through its ministries, we may be sanctified. Through its ministries, Christ, who is its head, its life, and its efficacy, works for our redemption from sin, and

reconciliation with the Father, and our practical holiness."

These were plain statements of Catholic doctrine; yet it found eager reception in a non-Catholic reading public. The circulation of *Brownson's Quarterly* increased. A few Catholic churchmen were reading Brownson, not many; and practically no Catholic laymen in America. Catholic immigrants held stubbornly to two things: That their faith was right, and that their education was not sufficient to profit themselves or their neighbors through arguments about religious matters. The emotionally excitable, emboldened by spirituous liquors, would offer physical combat, but nothing of a more convincing nature. Brownson's readers were Protestant ministers like himself, Protestant lawyers, presidents of colleges, and college professors. Politicians, and statesmen, too, continued to follow him. The personality of the man was worth watching. Weed still prophesied: "He'll wreck whatever he anchors to; and I hope it is the Roman Catholic Church."

But to continue:

"The Christian world is broken up into particular communions. Whence the cause? In the fact that Churchmen have lost the profound significance of the Church. What is the remedy? To take up the question of *the Church itself*, and ascertain what it is, what its nature, rights, duties, means. Now this question, we said, and we say still, cannot be answered by the historical method of the Oxford divines; for the very simple reason that it is not a question which relates to the history of the Church, but to its philosophy. The historical method is the proper method when the question is *which* is the Church? but not when the question is *what* is the Church? . . . If we know not what the Church is,

before we go into history, how shall we know what to look for?

"The great evil under which we suffer is not so much *wrong*-churchism as *no*-churchism. The great mass of the people have no real, serious, earnest belief in the Church at all. . . . Nay; they look upon the Church as something interposed between themselves and Christ, and as separating them from Him . . . instead of uniting them to Him. It is, in fact to the great mass either a stumbling block, or foolishness. . . . Before you appeal to history to determine what body God hath commissioned to baptise, you must prove that baptism itself is necessary, and that an outward divine commission to baptise is essential. . . .

"What is the Church here for? What is its nature? What is its mission? What are its rights? What is its authority? What the ground of its authority? What the principle of its operation, and efficiency? These are the questions which are to be answered, and these are not to be answered by appeals to history, but by profound meditation on the philosophy of the Church, and on the nature and constitution of things in general. These are great questions, and not to be answered by a few quotations from the Fathers. . . . We see very clearly the end to be reached, and the road that leads to it; but we must be allowed to proceed at our own pace. We cannot be tempted to turn aside, . . . to please, or to avoid displeasing, friend or foe; nor to engage in any discussion which we hold . . . not likely to be profitable to the cause of unity and catholicity."

Two lectures of Archbishop Hughes were printed in the spring of 1844. Their titles attracted Brownson's attention immediately. One was on *Civil and Ecclesiastical*

*Powers in the Middle Ages*; and the other on the *Christian Basis for the Science of Political Economy*. Brownson's comment was that so long as the prelates of the Church teach such doctrines as the lectures included, the cry "No Popery" will be of little avail in checking the progress of the Roman Church.

Letters poured in from both liberal politicians and liberal clergy to prevent Brownson's taking what was evidently his next logical step. As though they had held council on the matter, they protested in a chorus of complaint against Brownson's regard for unity and catholicity. They saw benefit in disunion. The rival sects kept each other in order, these men believed. The mutual ambition and jealousy among the sects prevented any one from gaining a preponderance. Brownson became irritated. "It is as though the Christian Church were a disease in the social body," he told a friend, "and, since we cannot expel it altogether, we must prevent the concentration of the virulence on any one point."

He struck back at his advisers who considered "sin" an abhorred word. He declared that the tendency of the age was for men to grow worldly, proud, arrogant, self-willed, and disorderly in mind and judgment. His determination to remain out of the Catholic Church until he could bring his followers with him was growing weaker. In his own statement, he calls the delay hesitancy; but Isaac Hecker explains it as zeal. Hecker says that he himself was looking out for number one, and entered the Church alone; but that Brownson told him that he felt like the general of an army, or the pilot of a ship: he felt responsible for his group.

True, Brownson did not know the complete dogma of the Catholic Church; but, to him, that was in a sense incidental. If the Roman Catholic Church was founded by Christ; and, if it bore the guarantee of its Founder that the Spirit of Truth would guide it until the end of

time, the Roman Catholic Church was the Church he had sought. But he did not want to go alone. As he looked about him, he saw few intellectual lights within it in America, and Brownson craved the companionship of minds that struck flame with his own. The sacrifice would be enormous. In mid-May of 1844, he was writing, not *Lead Kindly Light*, but

God Give Us Strength

“Restore us, O God, the glorious martyr spirit!  
Restore us the power to count all things but dung  
and dross,  
If we can but win Christ,  
And merit that crown of life,  
Which thou hast laid up for them that love Thee,  
And which Thou wilt give to all that fight the  
good fight,  
And finish with honor,  
The work Thou hast given them to do!  
O, is it true  
That the race of English saints expired  
With the separation from Rome,  
And that no saint adorns the English calendar,  
Born since that fatal epoch?”

He whipped himself into a fever of self-accusation. Never before was he ashamed to look himself in the face. Now for the first time must he admit fear to burn bridges behind him, and to grapple honestly with life as he met it. Now he caught himself hedging; seeking excuses to delay; unhappy in his present position; condemning the insufficiency of his past spiritual life; afraid to advance. He tells us:

“More and more I was dissatisfied with myself. My position, asserting the Church, and the necessity of communion with her, as the condition of living

the life of Christ; and, yet, living aloof from all communions; belonging, in fact, to no church, struck me . . . as anomalous, nay, as untenable. Was I living the Christian life myself? . . . Suppose I die before I have effected the reunion of Christendom,—what will become of my soul? I am engaged in a good work; but, what if I become, myself, a cast-away? Here is matter for serious thought."

In January, *Brownson's Quarterly Review* had assured its readers that the editor had no intention of joining the Roman Catholic Church. The April number did not contradict that statement; but, in the last week of May, a dramatic figure, half a head taller than any who had used the knocker before, bowed before the plump, little, old lady who had opened the front door of the Bishop's house. The tense guest asked interview with the Right Reverend Benedict Fenwick. The housekeeper told the Bishop that the governor of the state had come to see him.

Bishop Fenwick was gracious in his reception of Brownson. The conversation was long and earnest. The solicitous servant saw the hour of His Lordship's nap come and go. There had been pauses that lifted her hope; but between them she had told whole rosaries and had done the week's mending. And that was before Bishop Fitzpatrick had been called down to meet the gentleman.

The Right Reverend Bernard Fitzpatrick was at once honored and wary. He accepted his appointment as personal instructor of Orestes A. Brownson in the dogmas of the Catholic Church with a cold, shrewd eye. In this first interview he offered the neophyte no encouragement; and, for once, Brownson knew why without his expression of reasons.

But as the lessons continued, no major difficulties presented themselves. The whole battle had been fought and won in the applicant's study. There were many details for

Brownson to learn; but, strange as it seemed to the Bishop at first, the giant was anxious to learn them. His questions were not challenge, but grave and profound inquiry. Often they concerned points that Fitzpatrick had taken for granted as casually as he had accepted the stars in the heavens; but there were reasons, and he found them.

Brownson was willing to revise his pet notions; willing to accept the complete Scripture, the Douay Version; willing to make the enormous sacrifice that his becoming a Roman Catholic entailed. His instructor was convinced that the convert's "changes" were steps of advancement; and that a really great mind was being admitted to the treasures which the Church could offer.

Orestes Augustus Brownson was received into the Catholic Church on October 20, 1844. Bishop Fitzpatrick was his sponsor.

## CHAPTER XI

### Brownson His Brother's Keeper

SALLY HEALY BROWNSON had gone along with Orestes in every step of his variant course since 1830. They had read together; and he had allowed his gentle wife to temper some of his manuscripts. But she was in perfect accord with his trend toward Catholicism. Of their seven children, two sons and a daughter were under six years of age. Their sponsors took the responsibility of their declared faith in the Church, and their promises to remain within it. Henry, William, and John, whose ages were, respectively nine, ten, and fifteen, had gleaned much at the long table conversations. They had sensed a tremendous event in the family even before its occurrence. They had asked many questions, to the delight of their parents; and, now, their formal instruction in the fundamentals of Catholicism was covered in a few weeks.

Orestes Jr. did not return from Calcutta for a year. He was shocked beyond measure to find the whole family Catholic. He had expected any surprise but that. He announced that he was finished with the sea, and expressed a willingness to accept school as a necessary evil. But, the Catholic Church! Mrs. Brownson fitted him out with the clothing listed for students of St. Xavier's; and they started him off for Cincinnati, where he was met by John and William and introduced to the Jesuit Fathers. Within a year he asked for Baptism; and Bishop Purcell poured the cleansing waters. There was joy in Boston.

But sadness came, too. Brownson and his family were,

in no sense, private citizens. If Catholics were feeling that the conversion of a man like Brownson was, "no mere passing incident; but a turning point in the history of the Church," there is small wonder that the event struck consternation in certain circles not Catholic. Every mail brought condemnation and the cancellation of subscriptions. Personal admiration for Brownson had held many to him during his period of indecision. Then, they had faith in his candor. But, now, after asserting repeatedly that he sought only the *soul* of the Catholic Church, they found him, suddenly, one with its *body*!

Between two issues of the *Brownson Quarterly Review*, the editor had become a member of the Catholic Church. When the October number for 1844 left the press, he was one of themselves; but that month he left them, and he published the January number without mention of his change. They saw no defense for such reserve. They were, for the first time, outside the pale of his confidence. His reticence signified a door closed between him and followers who worshiped him. More than their surprise at his actually entering the old Church, was their disappointment at his apparent change in allegiance to them.

His very method of attack was different. They looked in vain through that January issue for such phrases as, "One hardly knows what to think . . ."; "while we admit . . ., we deny. . . ." Brownson had been a dramatic figure as a pathfinder: courageous, seeking truth for his followers at enormous personal hazard, mapping his findings as soon as possible, simply, on his own authority. His magazine had carried the atmosphere of adventure because of that. It translated his magnetic personality to paper. Young boys read him, and old men, with the same enthusiasm as a like crowd that had packed into the Masonic Temple of Boston. What if he were a dreamer

mind? If dreams came true, fine; if not, friends had lost nothing.

Intelligent followers had been willing to concede worth to the Apostolic foundation of the Church. They had found no fault when Brownson wrote:

“Down to the fifteenth century, the Church was the true Church, as true to the ideal as it was possible in the circumstances in which she was placed. Down to that period, she was the Church of progress, and continued, herself, to advance.” . . .

The editor might praise the ancient days; he might be true to actuality in an historical way, and hold his subscribers. Intelligent students of history knew that he was an informed man; and they were invigorated by his challenge to their habit of thought. But they firmly believed the Catholic Church of their own day to be a deception, a cleverly designed snare that was dangerous, alike to its enemies, its investigators, and its members. It attacked its enemies, sucked in investigators like a whirlpool, and weakened its members.

Brownson was a brave man and, they had believed, a strong man. They had hoped it to be possible for him so to study the teachings and doctrines of the Catholic Church, as to lift out for them the center of its existence, the germ of its life. With this they had expected him to build a new Church, holding the full teachings of Christ, without the handicap of the papacy. His use of the pronoun “we,” in all of his references to their blindness, pleased them. He was one of themselves.

Their prejudice was not deeper than Brownson had owned. At least it had not been more profound until his reserve intensified it. Their present opinion was post-judgment. With him they were willing to praise the Church’s ancient attainments and place in history, and many of the simple members who clung to its tradition

were good enough; but a person need not become identified with a cause, immediately upon discovering that some of its ill-repute was false. Why did Brownson offer no word of himself?

The Catholic Church changes a man. That must be admitted. And his former adherents were further admitting that Brownson, who had, until now, retained his personality while he faced both failure and success, had wearily surrendered it. He had finally weakened; and, now he was a puppet on a chessboard moved by a compelling hand. From shelves, kept apart for Brownson's back numbers, they drew copies of the *Boston Quarterly* to prove Brownson's attitude when he was sane:

"All that the Church has really done for humanity was done during what are termed the dark ages. She then laid her foundation for modern civilization, breathed into it her humane and gentle spirit, and animated it for an uninterrupted career of peaceful conquest. It was then she established schools and universities, founded scholarships, and prepared for a system of universal education. She emancipated the slave, declared all men equal before God, raised the bare-footed friar to the throne of Christendom, and made the rich sinner disgorge his misgotten wealth to feed the poor he had robbed, and to serve the interests of humanity."

Subscribers had then followed Brownson eagerly, and permitted him to chide them for their manners:

"Children, as we are, of what is called the reformation, and which was nothing but a rebellion against the Church, and the establishment of an insurrectionary government, we are too prone to forget the benefits of the Church; and, casting a veil over her struggles and her labors of love, we would fain make

it appear that there was no light in the world till Protestantism was born, and nothing done for humanity till a German monk dared burn the papal bull. But all that has been done since is but the necessary development of what was done before. He is an undutiful son who curses his own mother."

Brownson might call them anything so long as he appeared as one of themselves. That was their highest pride. But now something vital was lost. Where was their cherished friend in such a statement as this:

"We have one or two remarks to make on infallible authority . . . ; for this is a matter, though simple enough in itself, which Protestants do not seem ever to comprehend."

Such sentences built a wall between Brownson and his public. They read further:

"We regard it a happy day for the Church that she has, at length, secured in most Protestant countries the liberty to speak and write in her own defense. This is all that she needs. She asks no other advantage of Protestants. She knows the strength of her own cause and the weakness of theirs."

That third-person pronoun, that reference to Protestants as though they were antagonists, was a greater blow to his former worshipers than was the mere fact that he had found contentment in the Catholic Church. They were not only without a leader; but their friend was immediately allied against them. They told each other that it was as though a captured American soldier of the Revolution had joined forces with England, and had spoken of the colonists as "they."

Earnest Protestants looked upon Brownson's conversion as a painful personal misfortune from which they

would have saved him at any cost to themselves; but they saw no purpose in permitting a drowning man to drag others down with him. Their various disappointments took the form of pity, of bitterness, and of personal hatred. He would never be stable and dependable . . . Working Man's Party . . . Democratic Party . . . an ingrate pen . . . traitor. His voice might cry now in an empty wilderness. He would never again hear the unanimous answering call of that flock.

Not one of them entered the Catholic Church immediately; and few, even eventually. They left him because they did not recognize the man. The Church had not changed Brownson's feelings toward his widespread congregation; he had not lost understanding of them. Dr. William H. Channing was one of those who silently dropped out of Brownson's life at this time, leaving an enduring regret in Brownson's heart. Years later Brownson made public statement:

"There are few men outside the Church for whom we have a warmer personal affection, or a more sincere esteem . . . He is a man of singular purity of mind and sweetness of disposition—earnest, self-denying, brave—with more than his celebrated uncle's eloquence. We have loved him for many years, and before our conversion, we loved him as we loved few men, and hoped more from him, with a single exception, than from any other man. . . . We love him not less now, though our personal intercourse with him has been entirely interrupted, and we have ceased to have any sympathy with his views, plans, or movements."

At least there remained, from among the list of early subscribers, the names of George Ripley and Nathaniel Hawthorne. Others remained a year, two years, ten years; but eventually, left him. For, besides their religious preju-

dice, as such, the sects were habituated to a feeling of superiority over Catholics. This came from several causes: Catholics were necessarily the poor in England and Ireland, where, by law, only Protestants could hold property, or have any voice in government. Only they could attend universities. Catholics were, consequently, the servant class in America.

There had grown up, too, since the Reformation, a certain romantic regard for the successful rebel; and the Protestant was that. He had shaken off an irksome authority. Milton felt this sentiment so strongly that he forgot himself in *Paradise Lost* and made the rebel Satan a hero. He and his united cohorts made a better, and more beautiful, habitation of the Hell into which he was hurled than was his portion of God's Heaven. In America, recently freed from the rule of England, the word "rebel" signified heroism, bravery, adventure, pluck and ingenuity. It meant patriotism from which a relapse to a former allegiance was unthinkable.

Brownson knew the Protestant mind perfectly. It had been his mind. He had molded its convictions and sentiments in his followers; and he could continue to do so if he might be permitted to talk *to* them instead of *at* them. He saw that mind as a distinct thing, a mind with prejudices that might be wrong but that were facts to the persons possessed of them. Furthermore, the Protestant mind was at the time of Brownson, and continued to remain, the public opinion of America. Public opinion is, in America, a stronger power than is any law; and law, itself, in the United States, is strong only because it has public opinion behind it. Brownson knew in 1844, as well as in 1860, that:

"The journal that undertakes to enlighten and correct the opinion of its own public has no lease on life, and it will be as speedily and as effectually sup-

pressed with us, as by the police in France would be a journal that should dare question the wisdom or the justice of the imperial régime, or the imperial policy. No periodical with us can live except on condition of pleasing the special public which it addresses, and that public, be it what it will, is impatient of contradiction, and requires the journal it supports not simply to tell it what is true, right, and just, but to defend its opinions, prejudices, sympathies, and antipathies. It supports a journal only on condition that it is devoted to its cause, or its convictions, and sentiments. . . .”

The losses occasioned by the dropping of former subscriptions could not be replaced by additional subscribers. The exchange was of persons, not of commodities. The financial equivalent could be given to Brownson's list of losses. But, he was losing the audience that held his heart and listened for his voice. Brownson was gaining the doubtful privilege of reading learned instructions over the heads of a new group. They pronounced him “a smart man, and a great feather in our cap”; but most of the laymen could not understand him, and the clergy were more interested in influencing others to read the magazine than in reading it themselves. New subscribers could not replace old readers.

Brownson possessed an enduring instinct to protect and defend his kind, to save his people in his own way. They were good, honest people; helpless, because personally inarticulate. They recognized truth when they saw it; but they possessed, most of them, only commonplace intellects. They could follow, but not discover, a way. Only Brownson's deep and trusted voice could speak for and to them. They would hear no leader but him.

But despite the apparent changes in the personality of Brownson as a Catholic, many Southern Protestants ad-

hered to his magazine up to 1860, because of his expressed belief in State Rights. Had he not repeatedly insisted, as in his *Origin and Ground of Government* back in 1843, on the rights of the minority?

"But it is a mistake to represent the right of the majority as a natural right, an ordinance of God. It is not a natural right, but a mere civil regulation. By the law of nature, the majority have no more right to govern than the minority. . . . Truth and justice are, in this world, oftener on the side of the minority than on the side of the majority."

Brownson knew that although his politics sometimes pleased the South, his Southern readers were not interested in his religious articles. He prayed and waited for an opportunity to break the bondage of supervision in his writing, without severing the bond of friendship that he so prized. He believed that his friends both in the South and in New England were not only willing to re-accept him, if he chose to retreat; but to be led on, even yet, if he could but once speak his enthusiasms in a language that they would understand. Ten years passed; and Bishop Fitzpatrick still held firm.

The Bishop did not mean to do harm to Protestants, or to wound them. His mistake was in taking them for granted. The difficulty of Brownson's position, as Fitzpatrick saw it, was in trying to gain a trusting public in the Catholic body. Catholics would not be unwilling to share the infinite gifts of their faith; but they would be slow to accept the newcomer as a leader. The elements that frightened the old flock, had been assumed as assurance to the new. The standard Catholic phrase in the Brownson essay meant nothing to the New England Protestant; but it was clear as crystal to the Catholic clergy who had no need of it.

There was need of an Ambrose to welcome in the new

Augustine, and Bishop Fitzpatrick was not St. Ambrose. Isaac Hecker was of the Brownson group; but he had accepted formal Catholicism before Brownson did. As an outside observer, who knew both sides of the situation perfectly, his comment is pertinent:

“If Brownson’s reason for becoming a Catholic were put into a formula, it would be this: He found that he could not solve the problem of human destiny in harmony with reason without the aid of Catholic teaching and discipline. But this applied only after he had settled the philosophical question of objective reality of the facts of consciousness. These two branches of philosophical controversy were the providential theses of his life. By means of these he could have cleared away passion, prejudice, ignorance in the midst of his fellow-countrymen, especially in New England, and brought them to a decision, in a multitude of cases, as correct and inevitable as his own. What Dr. Brownson was able to do, he was not called upon to do.”

Again, from Father Hecker, we have:

“That with premises that are supernatural one can reach more deeply into the domain of the supernatural truth, no one will doubt who is amenable to sound logic. But that the supernatural can be reached by logical processes from premises, seemingly natural, is what no one, to my knowledge, has ever shown can be done before Brownson.”

With her husband, Mrs. Brownson had foreseen the cutting off of pleasant and stimulating associates; “But,” she consoled him, “with this new depth of joy, we could be happy with our family, in exile.” That was a woman’s reasoning. The center of her universe was in the happiness and uplift of the home. She had known a sheltered

life always. She had never earned a dollar. She had, therefore, no sense of insecurity in her husband's income.

But Brownson had not only a broader missionary outlook. He knew, also, that he must earn a livelihood for nine persons. As a layman he might not preach in the Catholic pulpit. As a married man, he might not take Orders and enter the ranks of the clergy. He considered studying law. The courts needed honest men. Perhaps this was the way of Destiny, he smiled, to put me in more intimate touch with the problems of the down dog. It must be that my poor need me there.

But Bishop Fitzpatrick objected. "Your magazine is enough. We can assure you of subscribers. The whole Catholic Church of America will be lifted, intellectually, by your hand. You shall be introduced to Canada. We will have hundreds of subscribers from there. Much error has flowed from your pen. . . . Give the pages of your magazine opportunity to make reparation for the heresy that you have spread abroad." Mrs. Brownson was pleased; and the editor was flattered. They both saw all America knocking at the door of the Roman Catholic Church in no time. There had been within the Church, as the Bishop had hoped, an immediate, gratifying result from Brownson's bold defense of Catholicism, whether on the ferry to and from Boston and Chelsea, in a restaurant, or in the learned columns of his *Quarterly Review*. There were poor cowering Catholics who knew, with the insistent faith of martyr-dyed truth in their blood, that the Church was right, but who trembled before hatred and scoffing.

These were the servant class in the new land. They needed employment; and they found it no advantage to express their resentment when the owner of a great house said slighting things about the Cross. When unbelievable stories were related about their Pope, their clergy, and their Church as a whole, they pretended they did not

hear. After 1844, they felt a new and fortifying assurance in the brave and learned champion who had "come into the Church from the Protestants." For the first time they stood erect.

Persecution in their own lands had made the poor instinctively hide the external signs of religion. Education had been withheld from the Irish, and they realized their inability to meet the erudition that defended error in the open forum. They could give no proofs of what they believed. But they knew the truth when they heard it stated in Brownson's clear terms, and they applauded their new champion.

Brownson was an asset to the Church. He elevated the tone of the Catholic Press and gained at first an enlarged reading public; for the real thinkers who had followed him before his conversion, did not entirely, and immediately, lose sight of him; and his readers from within the Church were many times increased. He wrote:

"It should be the aim of our Catholic journals and periodicals to instruct . . . the Catholic public, and encourage the creation of a high-toned, solid Catholic literature. . . . With a few honorable exceptions, the press is not conducted by living, thinking men. . . . It, as a rule, lacks critical capacity as well as good taste. How then is it to aid us in creating such a literature as we need to give us our just, moral weight in the community? We should show ourselves superior in every department of honest literature, and every department of living thought, to non-Catholic Americans, and it is the duty of the Catholic press to aid us in doing it."

Thus whistling to give himself cheer, Brownson proceeded to attack heresies and to prove truths and dogmas. But his words fell on deaf ears in Protestant America. For the old defenses of the Church in the Middle Ages were

originally addressed to weak members within the fold, or to learned theologians who respected, perhaps, all the tenets of the Church save the one under discussion. The old disputes were between erudite masters. The Protestants of the mid-nineteenth century in America were not of this type. Their distant forefathers, indeed, were once wavering members of the Catholic Church; but that was long ago. In Brownson's day the common Protestant notion of the Catholic Church was merely that it stood in error and that its usefulness was a thing of the past. Many continued to protest against the organization, as a whole, without knowledge or solicitude concerning specific dogmas of Catholicism. Many of them were sincerely searching for truth; but they looked upon modern treatises about unchallenged doctrines as a stale, ready-made, capsule-apologetics from a dusty shelf. They refused to swallow it.

Furthermore, there was no transition between Brownson's previous subjects of consideration and the new random topics that had been prescribed by Bishop Fitzpatrick. The distinctly Brownsonian style was hardly recognizable in the new channeled method, and his technical terms left old readers helpless. They missed spontaneity in the now Catholic publicist. The man from their midst might as well be wearing a Roman collar and a biretta. He had estranged his followers.

That was the point that Bishop Fitzpatrick missed. He thought it enough that Brownson was still devoted to the flock at his heels. It was the Bishop's understanding that they were an inseparable part of Brownson, and that they had but to step over the threshold as their leader had done. The pastures of the Church were rich, but this particular group was not ready for it; the new method of presentation stopped them in their tracks, and frightened them away. Said the Bishop, "If they go easily, they are small loss."

For Bishop Fitzpatrick had the traditions of persecuted Ireland as his inheritance. To him, a Protestant was an intellectual being who had blinded himself to the Church, or allowed himself to be so blinded, for the sake of certain temporal advantages. The non-Catholic, the Bishop reasoned, separated himself from the Church deliberately; and, wherever the balance of power was now in Protestant hands, he was being cruel to the Church. Look at Maryland, he cited,—the Catholic colony that offered freedom of worship, and welcomed Protestants, wholesale, within its borders. What happened? The newcomers seized the power, and forbade Catholic worship in the colony.

The history of Cromwell and of William of Orange had left bitter memories in the minds of Irish adherents to the Faith. Merciless experiences bravely endured by members of Bishop Fitzpatrick's forefathers were frequently recalled. His relatives in Ireland were, even now, forced to rent, from turn-coat robbers, homes that their grandfathers had owned. They were reproached with being untutored, because their families had been defrauded and denied schooling. The rebellions of the Irish were as romantic as any of all history, he declared; though they were, thus far, unsuccessful. But to the Bishop, that argued nothing against the pluck, bravery and ingenuity of its contenders. Bishop Fitzpatrick had strong feeling against admitting too many converts at once. He called his motive conviction, and not prejudice.

To him the reaching out of Faith to Indians, to pagans, was worthy work. If they accepted the teachings of the Church, their lips would bless the missionary who had carried it to them. They had never known, and disowned, the Church; and they deserved preference over those who had cast it from them, for any cause. Wise men had declared, and His Lordship quoted them, that the Church was stronger for having lost the weak members during

persecution days. It was well rid of the faithless who could deny it for a mess of pottage. The wholesale conversion of which Brownson spoke and for which the new convert hoped most ardently, would, if it materialized, sweep back into the little Catholic group of America, numbers of fair-weather Christians for whom the Church could do little good. They might, from within the organization, do much harm. They were powerless to do this from without. Leave them there. Descendants of deserters would be little gain, at best. Under pressure, they would fall back to private interpretation of Scripture and recognition of divorce.

No; the Bishop would be firm. Brownson must temper his zeal. The duty of a Catholic publicist, (and that was the editor's present position), was so to present Catholic dogma as to assure the Catholic layman, in an environment of heresy, what was the position of the Church. The Catholic laity must be rendered able to distinguish between revelation and superstition. Brownson could give them courage and self-respect. He should devote his magazine to the defining of dogma and the explanation of the heresies.

But Brownson had previously experienced the temporary loss of followers who, after years of estrangement, returned as his most ardent adherents. He recognized the necessity of satisfying the new audience that he himself was thoroughly Catholic. That done, he believed, he could go back and call for his lost sheep. His religious followers would recognize his natural voice, and gather round him to hear his explanation.

That done . . . That was never to be done. Catholics kept him under suspicion, and demanded renewed proof of his loyalty until the end of his stormy career. But in 1845 Brownson did not see 1860, and with high hope he attacked the task at hand with the manly strength that had marked his every venture. Word had passed rapidly,

among Catholic circles, that Orestes Brownson had entered their Faith. The January number of *Brownson's Quarterly Review* for 1845 was definitely addressed to them. But they were not profoundly interested. The editor missed such stimulating repercussions as Ripley used to write him. Said Brownson:

"The majority of our Catholic population is made up of the unlettered peasantry, small mechanics, servant-girls, and common laborers, from various European countries; and, however worthy in themselves, or useful to the country, to which they have migrated, cannot in a worldly and social point of view, at least, be taken as a fair average of the Catholic population in their own lands. The Catholic nobility, gentry, easy classes, and the better specimens of the professional men, have not migrated with them. Two or three millions of the lower, less prosperous, and less cultivated, and sometimes less virtuous class of the European Catholic populations, have in a comparatively brief period been cast upon our shores, with little or no provision made for their intellectual, moral, or religious wants. Yet, if we look at this population as it is, and is every year becoming, we cannot but be struck with its marvelous energy and progress.

"The mental activity of Catholics, all things considered, is far more remarkable than that of our non-Catholic countrymen; and, in proportion to their numbers and means, they contribute far more than any other class of American citizens to the purposes of education, both common and liberal; for they receive little or nothing from the public treasury; and, in addition to supporting numerous schools of their own, they contribute their quota to the support of those of the state. . . ."

But, Brownson was ever a strong optimist:

"Yet there is a respectable Catholic-American literature springing up among us, and Catholics have their representatives among the first scholars and scientific men of the land. In metaphysics, in moral and intellectual philosophy, they take, already, the lead. . . . As yet our own literary public . . . , I admit, is not large enough to give adequate encouragement to authors, and the general public makes it a point not to recognize our literary labors."

Meanwhile, half in pride and half in suspicion, he was watched continuously by Catholics with whom he was newly affiliated. By high and low he was secretly blamed and openly accused. From the temporal point of view, he suffered within the Church the sort of thing that confessors of the Faith are reputed to have met from without. The *Princeton Review* reports the story of a Presbyterian who asked Brownson during a magazine controversy with certain Catholic churchmen, whether he found the Catholic Church a bed of roses. Brownson's was a spirit that dared to speak plainly. The honest man's response was the simple truth: "Spikes, sir, spikes!" Yet, with it all, his faith was his highest possession, and the thing that he most longed to share with others. He declared himself in the first number of the last series of his *Quarterly*, "an uncompromising Catholic and thorough Papist."

This drew fire again from the *Princeton Review*:

"Professor Brownson has been regarded not only as a man of capacious intellect, but as a bold and fearless spirit, of American instincts, and beyond all individual control. It has been a mystery to those who knew him, who admired his genius, how a mind, vigorous by nature, . . . cultivated, . . . broad, . . . philosophic, . . . could embrace these theories, and

advocate them with such earnestness. But the mystery is solved by this unblushing declaration of a blind subserviency to the Roman bishop . . . ”

But while *Brownson's Quarterly Review* became a distinctly Catholic magazine, and treated of doctrines, maxims, facts, historical articles, and pronouncements of Councils, his heart harked back to his lost flock . . . his lost flock . . . The memory of their needs reproached him. He envisioned them as bewildered in a pathless forest somewhere in the region upon which he had turned his back. Mrs. George Ripley became a Catholic. Hawthorne's daughter Rose and her husband, Lathrop, owed their conversions to Brownson. But, for the most part, the old leader found himself a man forgotten in the Protestant world.

In 1857, he was prophesying:

“But this will not last, for it is against the interest and the genius of liberal scholarship; and Catholic authors will soon find a public adequate to their wants. Non-Catholics do themselves great wrong in acting on the principle, ‘No good can come from Nazareth’; for we have already in what we ourselves write, in what we reprint from our brethren in the British Empire, and in what we translate from French, German, Spanish, and Italian Catholics, a literature far richer and more important, even under a literary and scientific point of view, than they suspect.”

But the prejudice continued, despite Brownson's protest and his hope.

Brownson had pursued theology as though he were a student for Orders. His old reverence for books was recalled and intensified when the volumes of the Fathers were placed at his disposal. It was as though the key to

the Holy of Holies had been delivered to his hand. Bishop Fitzpatrick, witnessing the emotional side of the great, blunt men, found tears welling into his own calm eyes. Dr. Brownson's words were scarcely above a whisper: "May we hope that Your Lordship's high expectations may be realized in me. This is a great moment in my life."

In anticipation, his profound mind reveled in the infinitely perfect structure of the laws and dogmas of the Church founded by Christ. As time went on, Brownson mastered every difficulty that any heretic had ever known. He found pleasure in weighing one separate part against another to observe the perfect balance between them. His was the practiced mind of an expert critic. He had tested all the sects. It was a habit with him to prove and try all facts; for he was no immature seminarian preparing an assignment for a professor. He brought to his study a profound mind weathered by the experiences of many seas. He took no statement for granted until it fitted into the complicated design of the whole Truth.

At times his rugged individualism cried out for expression; but he continued to submit every line of his work to supervision before its publication. Then, suddenly, in the fall of 1854, His Lordship went to Europe, and left to the editor's personal discretion all choice of matter and treatment for *Brownson's Quarterly Review*. No criticism came upon the magazine because of this freedom. When the Bishop of Boston returned to his diocese, he found his neophyte a full-fledged publicist, confident of his position and disinclined to request advice in trivial matters.

And so, even at the possible cost of a cherished friendship, the *Review* became definitely *Brownson's Quarterly*. Henry Brownson comments upon the circumstance:

"From the beginning of the *Review*, for the year 1855, Brownson therefore published what seemed good to him without asking anyone's leave. At the

same time that he withdrew his publication from censorship, Brownson began to think of withdrawing altogether from Boston."

An unexpressed barrier did grow between the journalist and his Bishop,—an embarrassed silence in their common realization that the convert's sense of dependence was gone. No actual resentment, no ire, followed. They continued to appreciate each other. Brownson dedicated *The Convert*, (1857):

"To the Right Reverend John Bernard Fitzpatrick, D.D., Bishop of Boston, this unpretending volume is most respectfully dedicated as a feeble mark of the veneration for his virtues, and the deep gratitude for his services to the convert, cherished by his 'spiritual son.' "

There had been no misunderstanding, only a mutually regretted but inevitable assumption of a new relationship. Brownson had grown "of age." The General would return to his army and bring them in his own way to the conquest of truth. But he could not do this under the jurisdiction of a director who had counseled him to follow the method of the Scholastics. He was bent upon freeing himself, totally, from supervision so that he might go back after his earlier followers. He would so address them that they would recognize and follow again the voice of their early leader.

Brownson's early impression of the Bishop of New York had been a pleasing one. In the second issue of *Brownson's Quarterly Review*, the editor had reviewed copies of two lectures delivered by the Right Reverend Doctor Hughes, at the Tabernacle on the previous December:

"Dr. Hughes, the distinguished Bishop of New York, proves, by these lectures, that he is not only an eminent member of the Catholic hierarchy, but

one of the ablest and most enlightened men of the times. Such a man cannot fail to leave his mark on his age. . . ."

In the diocese of Bishop Hughes, he would, he felt, be acknowledged as an adult from the first,—he would be permitted to use his own methods, and live his own life, as a lay-apostle; here in Boston he would always feel restrained as before a preceptor. New York had always been a little less conservative than Boston. Brownson was grateful for the opportunity to leave.

Thus, when Isaac Hecker wrote from the New York diocese, in October, 1855, that Bishop Hughes, "would be quite pleased at your coming," the editor's indefinite plan became a determined purpose. Many of his friends had moved to the larger city because of its wider possibilities of success and general influence. Brownson had moved closer and closer to Boston with some such aim; but this time the pathfinder's impelling motive was not a desire to work in a larger group; but to become at last his brother's keeper. And thus it was that with a glad heart he spent the eleventh anniversary of his conversion, with a great sense of freedom, in the City of New York.

## CHAPTER XII

### To Elizabeth, New Jersey, via New York

JUST before leaving Boston, Brownson received from Europe two communications that gave him pause. In its houses of study for seminarians, the Catholic Church was being benefited by the sort of work he had been doing. His articles against Kant and against Gallicanism had been extremely useful. He paced the floor of his room, at first slowly; and then with such fire in his heels that Sally went upstairs to find the cause for worry. Orestes asked her how much of the furniture was sold and whether it were too late to decide upon remaining in Chelsea. Was he being saved from another blunder? Would New York be a mistake?

Mrs. Brownson read the first letter. It was from J. C. Shaw. In it was related the flattering reaction of Father Glover, S.J. to the *Brownson Quarterly*. And Shaw declared Glover to be, "the profoundest man I ever met." The Jesuit had just completed the reading of a half dozen consecutive issues:

"He took off his spectacles, and said with great emphasis: 'This man astonishes me; he is clear and strong beyond compare; that is the most masterly refutation of Kant I have read.' And again after reading several of the articles a second time, he returned to the attack. 'He pleases me more and more,' he said, 'I think God has raised him to hunt down and destroy the absurd principles now in vogue in politics, in philosophy, and in religion; but,' and he

went on solemnly, but his very greatness makes me fear for him; for unless he be solidly grounded in humility, the success, which so great power applied to teaching the truth assures him, will turn his head, and make him forget that he has all from God, and none from himself. May he remember that there have been *Origens* and *Tertullians* as well as *Augustines*."

Hecker had once advised "any place but New York." But lately he had joined with Rev. J. F. Cummings and Father Manahan in advocating Brownson's moving to the metropolis immediately. Brownson had decided, at last, in the light of differences between the diocesan heads. The editor owed no debt of gratitude to Archbishop Hughes and in case of a dispute he would dare to deal with him frankly, man to man.

Differences came. And, as it worked out, the contest was between Brownson on one side, and three men on the other. Archbishop Hughes became tractable in the hands of two politicians, Weed and Seward. The circumstance came about through a political problem in the west. There, the foreign population, now numbering two and a half million, were permitted the ballot after residence of a year. Their vote was so overwhelmingly Democratic that the Whigs became alarmed; and upon the defeat of Henry Clay in the presidential campaign of 1844, they declared that the time for drastic measures had arrived.

William H. Seward, eventually to become Secretary of State under Lincoln, had already advanced from a position of local prominence in Auburn, New York, to the office of Governor of the state. Seward was qualified by statesmanship. Besides an impressive appearance, he was gifted with delicacy of temperament, tact, a good mind, the power of wielding a challenging phrase, and an un-

tiring aptitude for study. His political ambition looked to the national capitol; and he grew indignant at the consolidated front, and the growing opposition, in the Democratic Party. He consulted with Thurlow Weed.

Weed knew that the local strength of the Democrats lay in the hands of Archbishop Hughes. His influence extended to a large trusting flock, who in the City and in the State voted the straight Democratic ticket. A man of wider reach and with a different group was that independent journalist and hurler of thunderbolts, Orestes Brownson. Both smiled at mention of his name. His crowd was just now voting Democratic, too. Seward had lost track of him after the 1830 episode in Auburn, until the 1840 caprice following his *Essay on the Laboring Classes*. He did not know that Brownson had now regained real prominence, and that the solid South stood with him. Weed did.

For twenty years, Brownson's name in the headlines or in fine print, had attracted the shrewd and vengeful eye of Thurlow Weed. Apart from personal motive, that name meant news to one in Weed's position. To him it meant also the track of political quarry. For, now that Brownson had turned Catholic, and seemed to be remaining Catholic, he and Hughes could hold the reins of election if and when they worked together. Brownson could regiment the young men; and the Archbishop, the old.

True, a youth of sixteen or eighteen does not figure at the polls yet; but he will become a voter in three to five years; and no young person who allied himself to Brownson as a leader ever forgot him or despised him. Brownson held earnest, sincere followers. They voted as he voted; not because he told them to, but because he made them see issues as he saw them. In the long run, Brownson controlled ballots. Seward agreed in pronouncing him a powerful opponent, and awaited Thurlow Weed's suggestion. Weed shook his head. He refused to

deal with the man, personally. Seward could not blame him. Brownson was unmanageable as an ally in politics. But, Weed had a happy thought. The other man in the case, as an opponent, could break Brownson. He smiled.

“Now that the Unitarian is a Catholic, we can put over him a whip that he will obey or leave the Romans. It will go easily while he lasts in the Church; and after that we can think of something different. Meanwhile, the fireworks will be worth watching. What is my prize if I engage Archbishop Hughes to manage the giant?”

Says Donn Piatt:

“Seward made Thurlow Weed a part of himself. . . . He [Weed] had inhaled from his earliest youth the atmosphere of political intrigue. . . . He believed every man has his price. . . . A man of no learning but of keen instincts . . . had a knowledge of human nature made perfect through its low but correct estimate of average humanity . . . [He knew well] the currents that sway through the impulses of passion, of which impulses ignorant prejudice is the most potent.”

Archbishop Hughes, Weed believed, could be permanently managed. It had been done before for a brief space. Hughes loved three things to such degree as to blind himself to his own gullibility where those interests were supposedly concerned. He loved Ireland, and he was proud to see the Irish attain success; he delighted in personal notice from the distinguished; and he glowed with importance when he thought that he had a hand in government. The Whigs could reward His Grace with attention from notables and make him rest back in the thought that he was a political power. The sooner Brown-

son should see Hughes in the wrong, the sooner the Whigs could enter the wedge to separate the two.

Under the flattering approval of his colleague, Weed expanded to details. Hughes should be invited to only the largest social affairs. He would be flattered to open some function with a Catholic prayer. Then watch eyes open! It would frighten Protestants of course; but they could be appeased. And if he proved himself to be tame, and really necessary to them, they could afford to treat him well. Perhaps he could be made an envoy somewhere; or bought a cardinal's hat at some stage of the progress. The churchman would never be consciously ruled. Weed knew that; but he was willing to throw a wager that he could do it, and not get caught. Grinning, he referred to the Maclay Common Schools Bill which he had engineered through the Archbishop, against all odds.

"You are a dog," Seward commented, "but a smart dog."

Mention of the Maclay victory brought leisurely reminiscences over which they had laughed many times. It was a contest over textbooks and religion in the schools. Catholics claimed that history was presented in a distorted fashion, and that the practice of explaining Scriptures, as a part of the opening exercises in the public school, was unfair to those who would interpret the texts differently. In 1841, they had contended for a share of the school tax in the hope of erecting and equipping schools where Catholicism might be taught to their children.

Weed admitted the intrigue, the worry, and the patience that he had practised in convincing the Archbishop that the Democratic candidate was no more worthy the support of Catholics than was the Whig. But he had won. Three days before the election on October 29, he had got Hughes out on the street to prove his power. Weed split the Democratic power that night, watched Hughes

win 2,200 votes for some soon-to-be-forgotten good Christian, and saw the Whigs carry victory by a narrow margin. The Maclay Bill became law. It legislated that no school teaching religious doctrine should receive money from the common school fund. It prevented Protestants from explaining Scripture, and Catholics from sharing the fund.

Weed, come to think of it, had been paid a very conservative sum for that little trick. That was a yet unpaid debt. Why, intelligent Catholics had all but threatened his life; for the Maclay Bill was the first law, passed in the United States, discriminating against denominational education. Catholics did form a deriding mob around the home of the Archbishop on the night of the fateful election. It had saddened him; but Seward's letter had helped to raise his spirits. He thanked Hughes for his part in the victory, and added, he remembered:

“It is, perhaps, not unfortunate, that the bill has, quite unnecessarily, been rendered so obnoxious that the public attention will still be directed to the subject. Every stage in the history of this strange controversy increases the strength of those who demand reform, . . .”

Hassard's version is this:

“It was during the agitation of the school question that the bishop formed an intimacy with Governor Seward which lasted for life. . . . Mr. Thurlow Weed was another distinguished politician with whom this school controversy brought Bishop Hughes into lasting relations of familiarity. It was from this time, also, notwithstanding the straightforward, determined, and honorable course . . . which we have seen that he, Hughes, adopted, . . . that the attempt was made to fasten upon him the character of a political intriguer.”

Carl R. Fish, in his *Rise of the Common Man*, tells the result of the Seward-Weed conference:

"When in 1844 Clay was defeated for the presidency by a narrow margin in an election in which the Irish were against him, the Whigs consoled themselves, or at least their pride, by saying that the nation that England governed, governed America. Wiser leaders, however, including Clay himself, came to the conclusion that if the Irish were so powerful they must be won over or divided. Particularly young Seward of New York made a point of his thoughtfulness for the Irish in general and, with his talent for friendship, cultivated the Reverend John Hughes."

Distrust of Brownson, once planted by his enemies in the heart of his Bishop, remained there. From henceforward he would be a worry to the prelate because a Catholic editor is more than an individual. He is a mouthpiece of the Church itself. His task is a difficult one. If the editor leans toward philosophy, if he delves into subjects profound in themselves, only a profound mind can censor his writings. Hughes was not deep. And he did not understand either politics or government. To him, both were mysterious and "highly respectable." He was flattered out of his senses when a high official apparently took him into confidence and asked advice. Yet Brownson says of him that the history of the Church in New York, if not in the United States, during the period between 1838 and 1864, is largely the biography of the prelate.

Weed extended the churchman's influence into Protestant circles. He arranged invitations from such men as John Quincy Adams, Mr. Douglas, and Mr. Calhoun, begging the Archbishop to deliver a Sunday sermon in the House of Representatives. Of himself, Hughes retained his power among Catholics; for he was a likable man. And he was honestly interested in persons from his

part of Ireland, or from any part of Ireland, and in workmen with whom he had associated as a poor boy in Maryland. Some of these were now successful merchants in New York City:

“Some of the principal Catholic gentlemen of the city gave occasional dinner parties, at which Protestants of distinction, authors, scholars, officials, and others were invited to meet the Bishop. On such occasions, Dr. Hughes always appeared to great advantage.”

It was the Archbishop’s custom to rule more through the weight of his personality and character than through the power of his episcopal authority. But as a matter of fact his exactions of loyalty were supreme.

In 1843, a year after the school-question political scoop, the churchman sailed for Europe to negotiate a loan for the New York diocese. Says Hassard:

“Bishop Hughes had for company on this trip his old friend Bishop Purcell [later also to be used against Brownson], Father De Smet, the celebrated Indian missionary, and Thurlow Weed, the well-known New York politician. These four were much together on the voyage.”

The scheme of separating two great powers in the Democratic Party was an intricate conspiracy calling doubtless for sleepless labor and untiring energy, in the beginning. Perhaps we have no greater assurance of the influence of *Brownson’s Quarterly Review* in religious and political circles than through the persevering pains taken by the Know Nothings and Whig leaders to kill it. Not too much was done at first; but after Hughes was won, after he trusted blindly, they dropped, in casual conversation with Archbishop Hughes, an occasional

thrust at some article, "which will do no good to the Catholic cause."

It was after a series of such remarks that Brownson, still in Boston, had received a letter from the New York Cathedral expressing regret that the editor chose to write about *The Power of the Pope*. "And at such length! Two extensive essays, such as had lately appeared, could intensify prejudice." Hughes had not read them himself, or he could not have believed what he wrote. In a second letter, after Brownson had inquired wherein was the matter of objection, the prelate was conciliatory. That second letter was the final determining force that decided Brownson upon leaving Boston for New York. In it the Archbishop said:

"I do not think that I should have written you, if I could have foreseen that my remarks would have afflicted you as much as your letter would seem to indicate. I fear that not much can be gained by private correspondence on the subject . . . written language is often-times liable to be misapprehended . . . whereas if the writer were present to explain. . . . Still, whilst all things are lawful, some things are inexpedient, . . . So far as I am concerned, the matter is now at an end, and I have only to assure you of the continued friendship and good wishes, . . ."

Brownson liked that. He accepted the letter at face value, with no thought upon the fact that he was outside the New York diocese at the time and out of its jurisdiction. It looked to him as though in the new location, he would be given a free hand. The conversion of America would have to follow: for he could then draw the same enthusiastic praise for the *Brownson Quarterly* as a librarian had written of his *Boston Review*:

"One may form some idea of the popularity of

your *Review*, by casting an eye on the reading table of our Athenaeum where it is to be seen in a very tattered and dog-eared condition long before the end of the quarter; while its sister journals lie around in all their virginal gloss of freshness."

That was his optimistic view until there arrived the high praise of the Kant papers. No stranger would have believed it possible to change him so completely without the fall of a calamity. But Sally recognized the mood as one induced by uncertainty concerning himself. She knew that Orestes was weighing his own motives,—that he needed someone to tell him that he was not running away from a duty to the Church, in assuming responsibility for the lost flock. She took the second letter. It was from Italy and contained much the same encouraging praise for the Fitzpatrick-chosen topics. But she saw no reason why correspondence should upset a man's plans. If more refutation of Kant were desired, it could be written from New York as well as from Boston; and she concluded with a reminder of Isaac Hecker's latest plea that New York needed Brownson.

He went; and there he wrote for both Protestants and seminarians. So that in October, 1857, a few Unitarians had accepted Catholicism and he was hearing from a distant seminary:

"I have been on the point of writing you many a time these three or four years past, were it only to thank you for having completely changed in the right direction my own and many of my companions' views on certain facts in history—for having shown us the necessity and I will add the happiness of holding fast to the thread that alone can guide us in the maze of history. 'Ubi Petrus, ibi ecclesia!' I was a great Gallican once, God help me, but if I had been asked why, it would have been found that political preju-

dice and not reason was at the root of it all. Your works gave my mind another bent, which a good Papist professor of theology and as good a professor of history served to strengthen and confirm. I will add that the professor of history himself (in the Grand Seminary of Cambrai) in the beginning looked at the facts of history through the untrue mirror of the respected Mr. Gosselin's theories; but after a hard fight in class for some weeks, sustained I admit, mainly on your arguments, he was induced to study things more carefully, and the result was that he . . . studied the original documents himself, and finished by giving us a course which many will remember till the end of their lives, on this idea, that we must take the Church's own interpretation of her own acts. You have the glory before God of having sowed the good seed deep in the souls of a hundred or two of young priests, who will not have received it in vain.

"How can I and my companions thank you for the high and manly tone which you have taught us to use in speaking of our Mother the Church? How can we thank you for the many hours of pleasure and instruction with which you supply us quarter after quarter? I see nothing but enthusiasm for you here among my brother clergymen. . . . One of them the other day to my great amusement, got up of a sudden from a perusal of your article on the worship of Mary (1853) and cried out loud, 'By this and by that, but that man is inspired!!' Now you see I have told you the good your works have done me and others whom I know, with all sincerity. I do not wish to flatter you. I think it is below me as a priest of the Church. But amidst so much abuse from . . . secret enemies, I want to tell you what some of your friends, even so far away as this, think of your labors."

But there was a churchman close at hand with another view of the missionary half of Brownson's work. In the Provincial Council of Bishops, held less than a year previous to Brownson's move, Archbishop Hughes had introduced the topic of the Catholic Press. Therein, he had made the statement that he was far from believing it an unmixed blessing. He had thought over its dangers, and he named three classes of Catholic periodicals which he considered "particularly mischievous." The first two, it seemed to the Archbishop, carried a distinctly foreign element into the Church of America; and the third class inclined to carry elements of America into the Church. He feared that the trend was toward conforming Catholic practices,—"so far as they could do so consistently with sound doctrine and good discipline, to the character of the American people." In that third class it was that His Excellency saw gravest danger.

Brownson's free hand had been in the City less than a year when it was challenged. He was invited by the Jesuits of Fordham to make the formal address at their Commencement Exercises in June. The Archbishop was present. Standing before a large body of ambitious, young, Catholic students, Brownson waxed eloquent upon the potential force within them for good: upon their possible power, as laymen, to do apostolic work, each within his own field. The speaker stressed the advantage to the Church in having such a group of educated American youths, Catholic in heart and action. Such young men, understanding the American mind and even the American Protestant mind, could, he was sure, present truths of the Catholic Church in a manner congenial to the habits and feelings of the American people. Let knowledge of their opportunity lend courage to their zeal.

It occurred to Hughes that in these remarks there was a veiled suggestion of Modernism, and an implied belief that the methods of spreading the Gospel now in vogue

in the diocese could be improved. Henry Brownson relates the incident:

“Hughes expressed to him privately, after he had concluded, that though his doctrines were entirely consistent with the Church’s teachings, at least, such as one might lawfully hold, he was not in accord with their spirit.”

Brownson accepted the admonition as a mere statement of fact. From his place of vantage on the stage, His Grace sat studying the audience. Class ’57 had caught Brownson’s torch. Many were enthusiastic; but Thurlow Weed scowled. At the close of the exercises, Hughes spoke and made “hostile and ironical allusions to Brownson.”

The secular press made little comment; but Catholics, particularly the clergy, took sides. The reaction was bad. On the 29th of the following August, Brownson received a lengthy letter:

“My dear Brownson:—During my stay at Watertown, I saw by chance a number of the *American Celt* in which a malicious construction was placed upon my remarks at the late commencement of St. John’s College, [Fordham].

“I intended at the time to notice the article. But I have not since been able to find the number in which it was contained. I think it is due to myself, not less than to you, to state briefly that in my remarks on that occasion it was farthest from my thoughts to make use of a single phrase or a single word that should be in the least disrespectful to yourself. There was nothing intended as ironical,—nothing as censorious, at least as far as you are personally concerned. You are aware that I did not agree with you in some of the statements contained in your

address. But that right of difference of opinion is what is mutually acknowledged wherever essential principles of faith or morals are not immediately involved.

"The author of the article in question [McGee, editor of the *Celt*] when he quitted New York, some years ago, was well shorn of his power to do mischief as a journalist. He was however, very respectably and numerously indorsed as a good Catholic and able writer by the ecclesiastic and lay authorities of Boston. Bishop Fitzpatrick, . . . and Roddan, after McGee's promises to be careful in the future, decided to give him another chance. Thence he went to Buffalo, where he received an increased sanction and endorsement, and he has returned, finally, to New York without my invitation or consent. . . . The power of correction on my part has been very much diminished by the course pursued in regard to him. . . ."

Would Brownson use his force to silence criticism, please:

"I fear that the time is approaching when this happy state of things [unity in the diocese] will be interrupted by the injudiciousness and sense of low and base pecuniary interests of some of those who have the guidance of what is called the *Catholic Press*. Causes of a similar kind have already . . . divided the great Episcopacy and priesthood of France, England, and Ireland. In those countries everything is comparatively homogeneous. But in ours, the very primary elements of Catholic social life are so varied and diversified that only by a miracle of Almighty God, the growth and peace of the Church could have progressed and continued so long. I fear, however, that we, in our turn are des-

tined to experience the shock, and perhaps the scandal, which unseasonable discussion in Catholic newspapers conducted by incompetent . . . editors have brought upon other Catholic communities."

There had been wide accusation that the churchman was interfering with Brownson's rightful freedom. Hughes denies this:

"You are aware, my dear Doctor, that as regards yourself and the *Review*, no substantial change has come over my mind from the publication of its first number. My desire is that it should increase and prosper. You are aware that privately I have been obliged to dissent from some of the positions which you have advanced in its pages. Since its publication in this city it has been my wish that your pen should be unguided by any other head or hand than your own,—under, of course, the deep sense, which I know you entertain, of the responsibility devolved on a Catholic layman who conducts so important a periodical as yours."

Yet, he cannot resist charting Brownson's course:

"I am sure you will not take it offensively if I make a few suggestions which I submit respectfully to your consideration.

"1st. I would say that were I in your situation I should avoid every censorious allusion to the nationality of any of our Catholic brethren. It is exceedingly difficult, even with the best intentions, to avoid giving pain to one's best friends either on one side or the other, if those exceedingly tender and delicate topics are alluded to . . .

"2nd. I would not write or say anything calculated to represent the Catholic religion as especially adapted to the genius of the American people as such.

The drift of your remarks at the 'commencement' at Fordham was to the effect that if the Catholic religion had been or could be presented to the American people through the mediums, and under auspices more congenial with the national feelings and habits, the progress of the Church, and the conversion of Protestants would have been far greater. This, of course, is a pure speculation. But it is a view in which I do not, and cannot concur. . . .

"3rd. In your situation, I would equally avoid notice or resentment of unkind articles in our small Catholic papers. We have all looked upon you as belonging to the whole Catholic Church,—as one who writes words of wisdom, eloquence and power, for the benefit of all. Under this point of view, it seems to me that you should be superior to the petty cavils and squibs of those who assume to criticise you, whether they have capacity to comprehend you or not.

"When I began I had no idea of troubling you with so long a note. And I must end as I commenced, by assuring you that I have never deliberately uttered a word, or entertained a thought, which would be disrespectful to yourself. I remain faithfully your servant in Christ,

✠ John, Archbishop of New York"

Brownson answered immediately on receipt of the letter; and, if he displayed a generous attitude in accepting the explanation, he made no gesture to receive the handcuffs:

"I never for one moment entertained the thought that you intended in your remarks at Fordham anything unkind or disrespectful to me personally. But I was surprised to hear you make those objections,

in public, to my address, after having just assured me they were only for my private ear. I regretted that, as I had said nothing against faith or morals, or which I had not, as a Catholic, and an American citizen a perfect right to say, you should have felt it your duty to oppose me thus strenuously in public. It was taking an unfair advantage of me. It was opposing to me, a layman, the opinions of an archbishop, and that the Archbishop of New York.

“There was no equality in the case. It was crushing me with the weight of authority, in a matter of simple opinion. You must not blame me if I did feel that I was hardly treated, and an ungenerous advantage given to my enemies over me. You and I cannot debate a question on equal terms before the public; for you cannot address the public in your own name against me without opposing me to the mitre. Your remarks, however intended by you, were an episcopal censure upon me; and I can see no reason why the *American Celt* had not the right so to consider them.”

September 17th brought another note:

“Dear Dr. Brownson:—I repudiate the malicious construction which one of our weekly papers has put upon my observations at the commencement of St. John’s College. There was nothing in my remarks or in my mind that was intended to be either ironical or disrespectful to yourself. You must be aware that on not a few points I have differed from you in regard to questions connected with your *Review*. This will not surprise you, whose very profession it is as a public writer to differ from others. I must say, however, that no substantial change in regard to the *Review* has come to my mind since the publication of its first number; and I hope that you may be spared

many years to preside over its pages with increasing patronage from the Catholic public; and, if possible, with increasing utility to religion."

That was velvet; but Brownson's interest was not in it. He had lost faith in Hughes. The confidence of a pioneer was an independent homage of the highest order. The early American measured the selflessness of a leader by such a crude observation as the location of the man's shadow. If it stood before his face, between him and his goal, he must have his back to the light, and be traveling in the wrong direction. There were plenty of such leaders in the Protestant church. If Brownson would rally his world to Catholicism, he must introduce a Catholic churchman as American as themselves, more brainy, more selfless, more zealous, and more understanding. Such a man was the Right Reverend M. J. Spaulding, Bishop of Louisville, Kentucky.

Brownson had previously praised Bishop Spaulding's *Miscellanies*; but he used a second review of the work as a means to hold a mirror before Archbishop Hughes. A mitre would thus oppose a mitre. A brief introduction leads to a commendation of the author:

"It is the production of a distinguished American prelate, who feels that this is his own, his native land; and who identifies himself with the American people, and consults their interests as his own. He speaks to us from an American heart; and what he says is hardly less valuable under the point of view of patriotism than under that of religion. He is not only a Bishop and a theologian; but, also, a learned man, an accomplished scholar, an eloquent, fresh, and vigorous writer, who counts nothing foreign to his purpose that affects the welfare of men, either in this world or in that which is to come. His reviews, lectures, and essays are well thought and

reasoned out. . . . They are not written solely, or primarily, for theologians, or even for Catholics; they are addressed to the American people at large, whatever their religious or political preferences or tendencies."

He knew that his bishop, the foreign-born Archbishop Hughes, was not a profound man, and that he was extremely sensitive about comparisons between himself and others. But the editor was writing the truth about Bishop Spaulding and no one should object to verity. He had much, much more to say; and he continued. He devoted thirty-three pages to the essay, entire, including such thoughts as the following scattered quotations:

"But he [Spaulding] is an American, free-born, a citizen, and feels that he is in bondage to no man. He was bred and born in the atmosphere of freedom, —in a country where man is man in all the integrity of his manhood. . . .

"No American can read it without feeling that the Catholic religion is at home in the American breast; if we may so speak, more American than Americans themselves, and that it is just what is needed to complete and consecrate the American character. The author is not one of those Americans who have no sympathy with the institutions of their own country, and are really foreigners in their sentiments and affections. . . . There is, as far as we know, nothing in the American self-reliance, activity, energy, hurry, and bustle, however repugnant to our old-world notions, that a Catholic may not reconcile with Catholic faith and morals."

On page thirty, Brownson breaks out with a passionate appeal for youth:

"O, for the love of God and of man, do not dis-

courage them, force them to be mute and inactive, or suffer them, in the name of Catholicity, to separate themselves in their affections from the country and her glorious mission."

Father Hewit wrote a congratulatory letter to Brownson. Others wrote. But Brownson's Archbishop did not compliment him. Instead, the *Metropolitan*, which was the diocesan organ, carried an article, which was later put into pamphlet form, *Reflections and Suggestions in regard to what is called the Catholic Press in the United States*. The essay was devoted chiefly to Brownson's *Quarterly Review*, and D'Arcy McGee's *American Celt*. Brownson was given much praise. Most of the blame was centered upon McGee; but Brownson was advised. From Henry Brownson, we learn:

"The faults he charged Brownson with were three: First, that he was too hopeful of America's conversion; Second, that he [Brownson] thought that the progress of the Church in this country would be greater when immigration would cease, or at least be sensibly diminished; Third, that he made an appeal for young men that was uncalled for."

Brownson could deny none of the charges. They were true; and the stubborn realist would make neither apology nor promise of amendment. Could he have feigned weakness, pretended a deep personal admiration for his accuser, or even shown surprise at seeming intractable, he might have outwitted Thurlow Weed. But for such possibilities, Brownson would needs be born again (and this time not in Vermont), to consider pretending anything.

The war was on; and threat of economic blockade was published:

"Catholic editors, therefore, need not be surprised if, when they trespass too largely on the feelings of

their subscribers, the circulation of their periodicals should be occasionally abridged.

"We should be exceedingly sorry if anything of this kind should occur in the case of *Brownson's Review*. . . . Even should all other portions of his works pass away, there is one declaration of his . . . which is destined to be quoted throughout Christendom . . . that he 'had brought nothing into the Catholic Church except his sins'. . . .

"We do not think, therefore, that the Catholics of New York . . . can afford to see *Brownson's Review* languishing or dying out for want of support. Suppose there are passages in it which some of us may not have approved of, what of that? It has been useful, and we think it destined to become more and more useful, as its learned editor shall be more and more cheered in his labors by the hearty support of Catholic patronage."

Brownson responds in his *Review* of January of 1857. He quotes at length from the *Metropolitan*, and from the pamphlet which is evidently a revision of the *Metropolitan* article. He quotes from the letter in which the prelate had said, "your pen should be unguided by any other head or hand than your own. . . ." And Brownson declares his independence:

"We write freely, from our own mind, not from any man's dictation; but we are responsible for the use that we make of our freedom. Whether we properly use, or whether we abuse our freedom, is not for us, but for authority, alone, to judge; and to its judgment, formally pronounced, we owe, and we trust shall always yield, unreserved submission."

But he could not permit the prelate to believe him ignorant as to the limit of actual power in a churchman:

"We are free, within our legitimate sphere as a Catholic journalist; and authority cannot censure us (though the father may counsel us), unless we step beyond that sphere, and offend against faith, morals or discipline. . . . If the bishop or archbishop who judges in the first instance does us wrong, our remedy is not in disobedience, resistance, or public discussion, but in appeal to Rome, to the highest tribunal of the Church. The law that governs journalists is, we take it, the same law that governs Catholics in all lawful secular pursuits."

If there has been threat in the *Metropolitan's* mention of an abridged subscription list, there would seem to be a counter-threat in Brownson's mention of a final settlement through the court of Rome, as a last appeal. He knew that Archbishop Hughes would hesitate to have a Vatican review of the case. He always grew testy and stubborn under compulsion.

And Brownson was not finished. With the old fighting spirit up again, he was prepared to make a test case to prove, before Protestant America, that the Catholic layman had well-defined rights recognized by the Church. He quoted from the Hughes letter to the effect that differences of opinion were recognized wherever essential principles of faith and morals are not immediately involved. Further, he quoted the prelate's good wishes and the desire that the *Review* should "increase and prosper." Brownson admitted that he had passed through a crisis, and a period of trial; but he declares in an exasperating assurance:

"We do not think the Catholic public are as yet disposed to suffer it to fail for lack of support. . . . And they will make almost any sacrifice to sustain a work that is sincerely Catholic and really useful to

Catholic interests. . . . We enter upon the fourteenth year of our *Review*."

There was a paragraph near the close of the article in the *Metropolitan* which Brownson ignored in his comments. It follows:

"We advise that Catholic periodicals abstain from everything having even a tendency to infringe on the regular ecclesiastical authority by which God has been pleased to appoint that His Church should be governed; that they shall not presume to draw odious comparisons, and publish them, between the clergy of one section of the country and those of another; that they shall not abrogate to themselves the position of oracles or umpires to decide where is merit, and where is demerit; that they shall not single out a clergyman for premature panegyric, simply because he is a patron of this or that journal, whilst they pass over in silence other clergymen, oftentimes of more than equal worth."

Archbishop Hughes also knew how to ignore. There was no published reply to Brownson's declaration; but he told him privately that he felt no necessity for two great leaders within so small a compass of territory and that the *Metropolitan* could take care of the needs of the diocese. "Meanwhile, I will have no power in my diocese that I cannot control." Brownson moved out of the diocese, and took residence in Elizabeth, N. J.

Hassard explains that:

"As Archbishop Hughes' health failed, his mental energies seemed to slumber. Not that his mind was weakened, but things that would have roused him to battle in the days of his strength, now made little or no impression upon him. Once in a while the old powers would awake in all their former majesty;

but only for a time. He passed almost entire days in his room, reading newspapers, chiefly; chatting with any who happened to call upon him, dictating letters, or perhaps beginning an article for some of the journals, and throwing it aside unfinished."

This being true, it seems strange to some that he should follow the matter of the Catholic Press with such persistent zeal. He gave only two lectures in the year 1856; his vigor was broken, and his interest could not remain long on a definite line of thought; yet his annoyance with Brownson remained a permanent attitude, whipped into occasional flame by someone. Finally, he reported the press to the Propaganda in Rome:

"Alluding to this essay" (says Hassard), "in a letter to a friend in Rome intended for the eye of the Propaganda, he speaks as follows of the conductors of the American section of the Catholic Press:

'As they [*convert* editors] became more numerous, and more acquainted with Catholics, especially young men born in this country, they imagined themselves an auxiliary corps to aid the bishops and clergy in propagating the Catholic doctrine among the Protestants of the United States whom *they* professed to know by heart. Their general idea for the accomplishment of this work, was a combination of lay elements, to aid indirectly in the work of the ministry. Their reliance was principally on the press: but, in connection with it, on associations, which they have not tried, and which have been tried, and which have all failed, viz.: *Catholic Library Associations*, *Catholic Lecture Associations* and, last of all and least profitable, *Catholic Clubs*. . . . They have been disposed, if not to find fault with everything that has been done, at least to point out how much more might have been accomplished. . . . Appro-

priating to themselves the words of encouragement which the supreme head of the Church addressed, under peculiar circumstances, to certain eminent lay editors of Europe, they have been disposed to look upon themselves as an unofficial but approved portion of the Catholic hierarchy. . . .

“These remarks will explain to you the necessity which prompted me to publish *Reflections and Suggestions on what is called the Catholic Press in the United States*. But I had another object which was to prevent these papers from sowing dissensions, or creating factions among the Catholics of my diocese. In this I have been successful. . . .”

The most severe attack upon Archbishop Hughes, in the press, had appeared in the *New York Times*, under heading *Rome and New York*. “Equitas” in this article charged the Archbishop with “maladministration, nepotism, indolence, arrogance, and a meddling and petty spirit.” The head of the diocese on reading the *Times* became physically ill. He was bewildered at the lengths that opponents could go. The secular press! Hundreds of extra copies were struck, and circulated far. It was not Brownson’s type of stroke; it may not have been McGee. The finger-prints looked like those of Thurlow Weed, busy in separating two strong Democratic powers. Hughes concluded his report to the Propaganda with notice of the Equitas clipping:

“The attack of ‘Equitas,’ in accordance with the intrinsic malice of its author, was cut from the paper in which it had been published, and a copy of it sent to every bishop in the United States, without either name or note or comment. I have reason to think that it was also sent to many of the bishops of Europe, and even to some of the cardinals of Rome, if not to the Holy Father, himself. . . .”

Again from Hassard:

"He [Hughes] was always sensitive . . . to public criticism, and particularly jealous of his good name at Rome. It was probably in consequence of these attacks in the *Times*, that he wrote the letter or report above referred to, a document of some seventy-five or eighty foolscap pages, giving a complete history of his episcopal administration. He sent it to a friend in Rome with the following letter:

New York, March 30, 1858.

'I enclose you a draft for \$300 [\$4.00 per page] on Packenham, Hooker & Co., in Rome for the purpose of defraying the expenses of translating into Italian the long documents which I have already forwarded to your address by the American-European express company,—or so much of them as the Cardinal-Prefect may wish to have translated. . . .'

In explanation of his "arrogance," the Archbishop relates:

"The people of this country, and especially those among whom I have lived, have great respect for a manly, straightforward, and outspoken vindication of any rights, whether civil or ecclesiastical, which men deem worthy of being defended at all. The gentle language of meekness and forbearance which, in ordinary circumstances, should flow from the lips of a Christian bishop, would have no effect upon the class of adversaries that I have had to deal with. . . . You will be pleased to explain this to his Eminence the Cardinal-Prefect; in all other respects, the documents, I trust, will sufficiently explain themselves. . . .'"

Both Baltimore and Philadelphia had spoken in Brownson's defense; and rumor was current that New York

had attempted to dominate the policies of other prelates in the matter with warnings against their sponsoring Brownson's cause. It would seem that not only was New York disinclined to recognize *territorial* limits to authority; but also to ignore the bounds imposed by the Church upon the *matter* of jurisdiction. This "meddling and petty spirit" was a serious accusation, and required explaining. Hughes did his best:

"Now my lot was cast in the great metropolis of the whole country . . . I had to stand up among them as their bishop and chief; to warn them against the dangers that surround them; to contend for their rights as a religious community; . . . I will remark here, that in all this I never thought of speaking, or writing, or legislating except for the special flock which the Church had committed to my episcopal care. But in a country like ours . . . the questions agitated in New York were carried into every village or hamlet. . . . Many a quiet episcopal see has been agitated . . . from the struggles which had to be sustained in this place alone. . . . This result was inevitable . . . but was never intended by me. . . ."

To Bishop McCloskey, rector of the American College at Rome, the July number of the *Quarterly* containing Brownson's *Punishment of the Reprobate*, had been sent also, to be laid before the Propaganda. Dr. McCloskey sent it to Father Cardella, S.J., who returned it with expressions of highest admiration for the writer!

A student at the American College remarked, as he saw the *Review* in the hand of Dr. Cardella, that he had a slight acquaintance with the editor; whereupon the Jesuit exclaimed: "A slight acquaintance! I should be glad to cross the Atlantic and come straight back for a slight acquaintance with this writer."

In a letter to the Reverend George McCloskey, his bishop-brother refers to the October number:

"As regards Brownson, I do not think his articles (October number) were prudent. I thought he was not in humor when he wrote them; but I defended him and told the Cardinal [Barnabó] that he was a good man and an able one, but not likely to surrender when his foes were battering at the door. I think there was a strong effort made to condemn him; and, but for the Cardinal's sympathy with such an old hero as Brownson, I believe the object of the others, whatever it was, would have been effected. He asked me to write to B., and advise him in a friendly way; but, not being very well acquainted with the old gentleman, and as the next number would have been published before he would get my letter, I did not write. What a pity people cannot bear without anger the views of an old man who happens to think differently from themselves!"

In 1900 Bishop McCloskey tried to recall the Roman Cardinal's reaction to the Hughes report upon Brownson. He said:

"... I do distinctly remember how strongly the straightforward Cardinal deprecated the fierceness of the attack which had been made on a man whose lofty spirit and fearless character was not unlike his own. Plainly, it annoyed him. What serves to fix the visit in my memory, was the dramatic manner in which His Eminence showed how an old Dreadnaught like Dr. Brownson would act, if threatened with the fire of a whole fleet of popular pamphleteers.

"But that Cardinal Barnabó was a very small man, and your Father a man of Daniel Webster's build, but taller by some inches, I could have fancied the

Doctor stood before me. Rising from his chair, and dropping his scarlet biretum on the floor, His Eminence put himself in an attitude of defense, as if to say: 'Come one; come all' intimating, for that I remember well, that if his critics had dealt gently with him, and pointed out his error, if error there was, no man was more ready humbly to acknowledge it, than that great champion of faith, who, for us, was what Newman was for England."

Cardinal Barnabó replied not too seriously to the complaints of the Archbishop. He had read "a great portion of your report": and he admired above all "your penetrating grasp of mind, in judging not only the past, but also the future of the American Church."

The more often the Archbishop read Cardinal Barnabó's letter, the more accusing it appeared. He regretted his first epistle; yet he was impelled to write another, definitely naming other dioceses and showing his recognition of them. In April, he wrote:

" . . . As to any rivalship between Baltimore and New York, in connection with the idea of metropolitan superiority, that I think, is quite out of the question. Baltimore was the first bishopric, . . . All Catholics in America look back to the memory of Baltimore with respect and gratitude. As a city it is of course becoming insignificant and fading in comparison with others. But . . . as to any rivalship between New York and Baltimore . . . the idea seems to me almost childish— . . . "

That was in 1858. But Rome does not act in a day, and it was 1861 before Cardinal Barnabó made time to prepare an official reply to the accumulated accusations brought against Brownson. Then His Eminence sent a request from Rome to the Reverend J. W. Cummings,

now in New York but recently in Italy. Would Father Cummings be kind enough to investigate a series of Brownson's articles with reference to the temporal principality of the Church? Father Cummings would be glad to serve in the capacity of investigating Brownson's worth. Cummings wrote to his friend, the Reverend Joseph M. Finetti:

"Some of the magnates here have tried to get the Propaganda to denounce Brownson, but Roman wisdom is not as easy to entrap as they think."

Meanwhile, Brownson, utterly unmindful that he had been reported to Rome, was brewing himself a whole new pot of trouble. During the winter of 1861, certain societies of Catholic laymen had drawn the Archbishop's wrath, and had been threatened with suppression. To Brownson that condition was regrettable; so, in the April number of his *Quarterly*, he spoke some of his views on the matter: Such societies, rightly sponsored and directed, could be an aid to the wide mission which is the field of Catholic labor. Through them, Protestants could see Catholics as a congenial, unified group wherein they might learn facts of doctrine. They would ask laymen to explain Catholic matters; while they would avoid conversation with a priest. In them, vocations to the Catholic priesthood might be fostered in American youth; and, thus, a crying need would be satisfied.

The ink in that issue was scarcely dry before Thurlow Weed stood on the stoop of the Cathedral Residence. The Archbishop simmered. What would Brownson dare next? And what would become of the Church in America if Hughes had not taken into his friendship such a selfless and devoted guardian as Weed? It was agony to see harm being done to members of one's flock, though, when there was no remedy to be applied. Hughes admitted that he could not reach him; still, the July number must not

be permitted to carry another allotment of stupid nonsense. Such were the things that made officials old.

Brownson was not growing younger himself. Gout and rheumatism were taking occasional jibes at him; he had two sons in a war where some generals were careless enough of the lives of their men; and his mother was ailing more than usual, lately. In July he really felt that he should go to her; but he had promised to speak at the Fordham Commencement again. The Jesuits had doubtless forgotten the earlier episode on a similar occasion, and he himself was willing to let bygones be bygones. Mrs. Brownson and Sarah went to Balston Spa. Brownson promised to follow if they found any immediate danger.

The function found Orestes Augustus Brownson and His Grace John Hughes again on the stage of Fordham University, New York City. It was an awkward moment when their eyes met; but neither seemed burdened by disagreeable memories. The speaker of the day launched into a masterful address on the nation, its needs and its hopes. His Grace heard little of the speaker's eloquence. He was preparing his own remarks that would follow that lecture. Brownson was seated, at last, amid a deafening applause. But the clapping stopped, suddenly, as the Archbishop stood in the middle of the stage and signified his displeasure at the tumultuous enthusiasm before him. He raised his hand for quiet. He spoke briefly of the importance of the occasion, congratulated the Class of '61; and then launched forth on Dr. Brownson and "his school."

"It was a bolt out of a clear sky," says Henry Brownson. There was consternation on every side. The Jesuits were greatly alarmed lest the affair should find its way into the newspapers . . .

"When Hughes spoke so severely against Brownson and the Americanizing Catholic Club, of which he

insisted on making Brownson a member, the latter rose to speak in his own defense; but the Archbishop commanded him to sit down, and Brownson obeyed. The Jesuits, then, conducted the Archbishop and the other invited guests, except the orator of the day, to the banquet. Not one of them came near Brownson again; but he was left the solitary occupant of the hall till the departure of the train for New York.

“Brownson never complained of the conduct of the Jesuits on this occasion; but maintained that it was perfectly proper for them, even at great cost to others, to keep on the best terms they could with the Bishop of the diocese in which they lived. . . .”

When he got home he wrote Mrs. Brownson: . . .

“I was in the City nearly all last week, and am going today to Faunthill,—the Sisters of Charity. At Fordham, the Archbishop made an onslaught on me publicly for Barry’s articles; but, in revenge, my friends among the clergy have made me up a purse of \$200. . . .”

Political managers had again succeeded in standing between Brownson and his greatest national service. They were now standing between him and his greatest service for the Church,—between him and the great body of contemporaries, Catholic and Protestant, that might have been influenced by him. True to type, the politicians studied the weaknesses of good persons in authority, as a means to accomplish ends otherwise impossible for them to effect. They fanned religious bias wherever it could be found outside the Church; and they formed, and kept alive, petty prejudices of leaders within the fold. Through otherwise worthy guides, whose vision was temporarily perverted, they convinced poor and immigrant Catholics,

against the testimony of their senses, that Brownson (the man who had sacrificed wealth, position, and a name among the great, in order that he might be of service to them, in order that he might have a free hand to help them) was their enemy. They convinced churchmen that the greatest Catholic mind in their time was worse than useless to them because of his presumed ambition and rebellious spirit.

If these accusations seemed to the prelates, at first, to be founded only upon suspicion, they later had reason to consider their advisers as astute minds. For the accusations were followed by certain circumstantial evidence. After the accusers had attracted attention to dangers, they had seen to it that their prophecies grew into realities. This gift of "foreknowledge," possessed by his friends, was invaluable to such a busy man as Archbishop Hughes.

Thus while the prelate and clergy were absorbed in defending their right to direct the youth of the land in the way that it should go; while Catholic immigrants flocked to the rallying call of Orangemen in disguise; while Brownson was defending himself with the Propaganda at Rome, there was a turn in the result at the polls. The Whigs, with their Republican successors, grasped national political power once more. The victory was for skillfully applied, scientific politics. A potentially great churchman threw the whole weight of his influence against his own party and against that of the strongest lay defender of the Church in America. Archbishop Hughes was a power among powers. He was a determined man with many avenues of activity. Once that churchman was convinced of Brownson's force for ill, Seward and the rest of them might apply their minds to other matters.

Even the circulation of the *Brownson Quarterly* fell. No brewers of discord could call for more satisfying reward than the instigators of enmity must have felt when they read in the Catholic organ of Cincinnati, the *Tele-*

*graph and Advocate*, the prophecy that the *Boston Pilot*, another Catholic paper, would sink as sure as the Royal George "if it sustains the views of Brownson." Mr. J. Mudd of Cincinnati wrote Brownson:

"Since the going forth of that edict, the *Pilot* has found no resting-place in the bookstore of Walsh, from which have been industriously circulated among Irish Catholics of Cincinnati the paper with the wrong name, the *Irish-American*, and the still more diabolical sheet of Mitchell, Meagher & Co., which has constantly abused the Catholic hierarchy, and proceeded so far in its impiety as to speak of Jesus Christ, the Incarnate Wisdom of God as a convict."

Among the manuscript letters in the University of Notre Dame archives is a letter from Brownson to Roddan (editor of the *Boston Pilot*):

"I send a communication to the *Pilot*. It is, you will see not in my handwriting, and I do not wish to [be] known as its author . . . I am in low spirits, nearly discouraged, and I want to be revived, encouraged, and posted up. I have none but you upon whom I can depend. Come and see me and make a man of me again."

Brownson knew now that his cause was in court. He had been notified, and given opportunity to justify himself. His first response was brief; but six months later, on receiving a second warning from Father Cummings: "Parties are at work to injure you with authorities at Rome," he wrote a full abstract as to his propositions relative to the subject of the Roman government, declared his motives for taking up the discussion, and asserted his loyalty to the Church. He enclosed no money for any purpose. Then, from mid-August he waited to

hear his fate. He turned the problem of challenge over and over in his mind.

Although the dogma of Papal Infallibility had not yet been promulgated, Brownson fastened all of his hope upon just that. Humanly, all odds were against him. In starting this as a test case and provoking the Archbishop to report him, he little thought that he would suffer so acutely through it. A thousand times in a day, Brownson's troubled thoughts dallied with the dreadful consequence of misinterpretation. Sometimes he was not sure that his hope was strong. The human element . . . the human element. . . . And such profound consequences in the balance . . . If I am wrong, God, give me light to see . . . Let this not cost me all that I have found . . .

And Brownson had to learn to wait. Patience was a new virtue to this man of force. The strain reacted upon him, physically. With two sons at war, and his mother ill, old age came on apace. A dull ache rested in his throat, and seasoned all his prayers. Finally, a letter came from the Cathedral Residence in New York:

"New York, October 3rd, 1861.

Dear Sir:—

I have received a letter from the Sacred Congregation in Rome, expressing great dissatisfaction and even uneasiness, in regard to yourself, founded upon the July number of the *Review*. Who has presented the statement to the Congregation I do not know. But they write me to inquire whether it is true, and if it is true, urging me to put the faithful of my Diocese on their guard against your writings. The objections are that you oppose, and profess to refute, certain opinions that are sacred to the Catholic Church—that you calumniated the Church by maintaining, either directly or indirectly, that she crushes

intellect down to the level of the belief of simple Catholics—that your disquisition on Hell is unsound in itself, and dangerous to your readers.

“I have replied that as to your personal orthodoxy as a Catholic I have not the slightest doubt—that I think it very inexpedient either for the Congregation or myself to write anything on this subject. This is the substance of their letter to me and my answer.

“I write this for your own personal inspection. I wish it to be considered as private, and to remain, very respectfully your obedient servant,

✠John, Apb. of New York.”

For the first time in the old warrior’s life, he was too stunned to speak. In every crisis, Sally had been valiant. Upon her, Orestes could always rely for the word that could lift him from the depths. But, this time, she could but answer the tears in his eyes with her own.

He picked up a copy of the *Metropolitan* and read an answer to his *Slavery and War*. Brownson could not know that Weed, with every appearance of a conscientious man worried beyond hope, had urged the Archbishop to write it. He was not in a mood to seek excuses for his critic. He sat at his desk and prepared a thirty-page answer. Meanwhile, Archbishop Hughes was addressing Seward at Washington.

“You may have seen in *The Metropolitan Record*, a criticism of mine on what I regard as an untimely article in *Brownson’s Quarterly Review*, entitled *Slavery and War*. If you have seen or have had time to read it, it has explained itself. It contains my sincere convictions on the subject. If I had not corrected the reviewer’s position he would have done vast mischief, without, I think, intending it, to the struggle in which the country is now engaged.”

Brownson's paper had advocated the freeing of slaves as a war measure to weaken the South. Hughes maintained that such action would but cause further disintegration in an already divided country. Weed had whispered a secret fear that the Know Nothings might seize upon the suggestion as a new cause or excuse for intensified bigotry. In its conviction the *Metropolitan* had gone too far.

Brownson was singularly indifferent to his own good name. He had had to choose repeatedly between making a strong character and making a wide reputation; and at the age of forty he had been able to say, and mean it:

“What I want is to get these doctrines fairly considered, and if they are but so considered, it is matter of little consequence to me in what estimation I may be held, or the charges that may or may not be brought against me. For my own reputation, any further than a good name is needed to enable one to serve his country, and as a legacy which every man is bound to leave his children, I care nothing at all. ‘Strike, but hear.’”

The editor's principles had not changed in the intervening eighteen years. He had tried to be patient; and he had tried to follow the warning of Father Putnam who had written the previous April begging Brownson to avoid dispute with

“a certain dignitary, at whom a severe passage in your last article seems to be pointed. He is formidable as an adversary because of the measures he may be provoked to employ to your pecuniary disadvantage. He may be above this; and it may be that you, yourself, have already ‘counted the cost’; but I entreat you for the love of Jesus Christ, to have patience for the infirmities of those whom God has

appointed to high places, and whatever scandal may come, to be able always to declare that it has not come through you.

"If this advice seems presumptuous do not think that any dictation is intended, but impute it to the over-solicitude and jealous affection of your grateful friend."

The name of the "formidable . . . adversary" is veiled in this brotherly warning, but Brownson knew to whom it referred. He thanked Father Putnam, and held his peace fairly well until this criticism appeared in the *Metropolitan*. It accuses Brownson of maintaining that "the end and purpose of the war is not, or at least should not be, merely to sustain the constitution, government, and the laws of the country, but to abolish slavery in the southern states."

There is no veiling of names or of feeling in Brownson's reply. He considered himself pushed to the wall. Under heading *Archbishop Hughes on Slavery* he responds. First he proves to his own satisfaction that the unsigned critique was written by the Archbishop. Then he tells that some were loath to believe this true because "its style is deficient in that dignity . . . to be presumed in the writing of an archbishop."

The atmosphere of the nation was charged with the brooding prejudice of civil war. Momentous questions, demanding days of calm deliberation, clamored for immediate decision. Men, forced by the crisis to write in haste, spoke from sincere hearts but often without logic. Thus doubtless was occasioned the slip from the pen of Archbishop Hughes.

The matter of Brownson's essay is of little present interest until we come to reference citing error in the Hughes essay:

"Under the circumstances, it is very difficult to dis-

cover in the purchasers [of slaves] any moral transgression of the law of God, or of the law of man where that traffic is authorized."

To this Brownson opposed the Bull issued by Pope Gregory XVI, in 1839, and says:

"The writer has unquestionably incurred the interdict pronounced by the Church, for she not only excommunicates all who are engaged in the traffic, as he alleges, but 'absolutely prohibits and interdicts all ecclesiastics and laymen from maintaining that this traffic in blacks is permitted, under any pretext of color whatsoever; or to preach or teach in public or in private in any way whatever anything' in its favor or extenuation."

The Archbishop knew when he was defeated, and he admitted to Brownson, within a few days, that he had been caught napping:

"I will never write anything against you again."

Meanwhile, a letter from Brownson's friend Father Cummings arrived:

"Dear Doctor:—Your letter of explanation, dated August 12th, was received and read with pleasure at the Propaganda. Had it been received sooner the Cardinal Prefect would not have forwarded the subsequent document dated August 31st, which they now desire to be considered *non avenu*. Rome is satisfied with your explanations and with your disposition to submit all you write to the judgment of the Church. By the mail of August [September 12], the Propaganda wrote to the Archbishop of New York to inform him of Mr. Brownson's *éclaircissements* and to tranquilize his mind in reference to that writer's 'disposition.' They have been especially pleased that

the first notice they had of inaccuracy, Errors . . . [slips of the pen], touching the eternity of punishment of the lost, came from yourself with a promise of early correction. They notice the closing expression in your letter, 'There is no salvation, at least for me, outside the Catholic Church,' and they do not suppose that you believe that there is salvation under the circumstances indicated for anybody else. I am, in fine, exhorted to comfort the Reviewer especially under the various afflictions which God has permitted to befall him at the present time.

"I think you take a little unfair advantage of Gioberti when you blame him for saying that sin has its dialectic side. He says it, I think, only of original sin which was actual in Adam and Eve alone. He does not say it of actual sin from which alone your *reductio ad absurdum* seems to me to flow.

"The article on *Slavery and War*, in the main, you know, I do not accept; its side hints are deserved, and will do good. Besides, I believe you are honest in what you say. . . . the response to it has been a brutal kick which your friends here say you partly deserved. Take it as a penance, my dear Doctor, and learn to live and labor without sympathy. Care for the approval which your conscience will bestow upon you at the feet of the crucifix,—and labor to say what you have learned, from your study of the Doctors of the Church, to be the truth as received from the Church, and not to say what will please even great Bishops and great ones of the earth of whatever order.

"I would like to have a line from you. With respects to Fathers Bapst and McElroy, I am very truly your friend,

J. W. Cummings."

Mrs. Brownson took up the Hughes letter to make comparison. But Orestes waved it away: "Unfortunately, I shall never forget what is in that letter. Let us never unfold it." Brownson did nothing further to make embarrassment for the churchman; but the *Slavery* dispute had got into print. Quotations flew about like loosed birds. Veuillot translated the *Metropolitan* criticism for his Paris paper *L'Univers*. This was sent to Rome. Archbishop Hughes grew desperate. He confided in Weed who leaped to the rescue. They were in luck. The Union Capt. Wilkes had made seizure on the high seas of Mason and Slidell on board the British mailship *Trent*. They had escaped through Union blockade to Havana, and had taken passage to Southampton with purpose to represent the Confederate government in London and Paris. Britain was indignant. The affair was of such importance as to require a national representative to visit England. If Hughes might act, he could visit Rome also, and clear things up for himself.

Seward was agreeable to the plan. He called the Archbishop to Washington, named him envoy for the United States, to undo such harm in Europe as might have been accomplished by the Confederate commissioners who had been released. It had been previously and privately agreed that Weed, the real commissioner, must accompany the representative, and take care of the business; but he must get himself invited by Hughes. Thus Weed laughingly volunteered to act as the Archbishop's secretary, or even as his servant. Would His Grace not condescend to suggest Weed's name to the Senate? The old prelate settled back with satisfaction. He had grown very fond of Weed. He replied only, "Would you like to come?" He went to New York, directly, and booked passage for Weed, paying for the ticket himself. Then he sat down at his desk and wrote "honest Iago":

“Dear Weed:

“I cannot ‘condescend’ to appoint you to any of the offices . . . which you solicited in a whisper the other evening, in Washington. But I do hereby appoint you, with or without the consent of the Senate, to be my friend, as you always have been, and my companion in our brief visit to Europe. . . . I have engaged a stateroom for you next to my own.”

Archbishop Hughes got into immediate correspondence with Cardinal Barnabó, Prefect of the Congregation of the Propaganda, explaining the purpose of his mission:

“The Government knows that the people of America, both of the North and of the South, whether Catholics or Protestants, have great confidence in me, as one who will never say any thing but what he knows or believes to be true: that I am regarded as no enemy of the South; . . . more reliance would be placed on my statements . . . than . . . of any official minister.”

Augustin Cochin, Mayor of the Tenth Arrondissement of Paris, sought out the distinguished American. He was personally interested in the man just at this time because Brownson’s *Slavery and War* had been inspired by Cochin’s book *L’Abolition de L’Esclavage*. Hassard says:

“While he was in Paris, in 1861-’62, this article was quoted to his disadvantage by the French journals, and Mr. Augustin Cochin suggested to him the propriety of making some explanation. It has been said that, in a letter to the editor of the *Journal des Debats*, he [Archbishop Hughes] denied the authorship of the article. This is a mistake; what he did write to that periodical was that, as the article in question appeared editorially in the *Metropolitan Record*, the editor of the *Record* was the proper per-

son to make responsible for it. At the same time, he declared that, although opposed to abolitionism, he was not, never had been, never could be an advocate of slavery. Among his friends he made no secret of his being the writer of the article in the *Record*."

Mayor Cochin's letter to Brownson reports it differently. In translation, it reads:

" . . . But to be exact, Archbishop Hughes has been in Paris. He received me most graciously; he explained to me that he had neither signed any article nor given anyone the authority to translate the pages of the *Record* as attributed to him. Without question, he disapproves the excesses of the abolitionists, hopes that the Catholics will not be divided in the slavery dispute, thinks that this burning question should be approached and solved only with patience; but he, even as you and I, regards slavery as a scourge, an injustice, and an inhumanity. The Archbishop was very willing to explain his feelings to me in such a manner as to give me complete satisfaction, and at the same time he excited in me feelings of both appreciation and respect for him personally."

In a letter to Montalembert, Brownson refers at length to the matter:

"I find by a letter from your friend, M. Augustin Cochin, that he has had an interview with the Archbishop of New York, and that the Archbishop left upon his mind the impression that he was not the author of the article against me, translated for *Le Monde*, and that he is a decided anti-slavery man. The Archbishop wrote, that is, dictated the article in question. Of that there is no doubt, and it was written for the express purpose of checking the anti-slavery sentiment in this country, and to bring the

pro-slavery prejudices, almost universal among the Irish Catholics of this country, to bear in crushing me and my *Review*. . . . I know him well. But he is old and broken in body, and enfeebled in mind, and though he is determined to ruin me, I pray to God to keep me from harboring any uncharitable or vindictive feeling toward him. It will take half a century to repair the evils he has done and is doing to the cause of Catholicity in this country. . . .”

Truly, the Archbishop was no longer to attack Brownson publicly. He lived but two years more. Brownson's later opponents were lesser men, mere echoes, most of them.

## CHAPTER XIII

### The Controversialist

MANY burning questions, other than those mentioned in the previous chapter, were fought out in words by an excited public between the mid-year of the century and the first gun of the Civil War. Know Nothings were convincing thousands that the Catholic Church was the worst menace harbored within the nation. Every gathering society was split asunder over the thousand phases of the labor problem. Printing presses steamed fury. Platforms of halls and lyceum buildings shook with the ardor of debaters, young and old.

Orestes Brownson was in the heat of it all,—conversing, and delivering speeches; carrying an enormous personal correspondence, and turning out, alone, his own entire magazine; fighting his own battles, and bolstering up weak spots for others in the same cause; sponsoring States Rights on the grounds that the United States had surrendered comparatively few of their original prerogatives of statehood, and balking at secession lest the life of the whole be endangered by disintegration.

It was in controversy that Brownson acquired the epithet, "the old lion." First of all, his appearance suggested the name. His giant height had filled out. He had grown heavy, and he moved with the slow deliberation of power at leisure. He retained his great shock of hair, now gray, and still thrown back like a mane. It had receded, somewhat, from his temples, and its long strands met a white flowing beard. His forehead was rutted with marks of thought. His mouth, always firm, tightened into a grim

line in argument. As a speaker he paced the platform and bellowed foxes from and into holes of shelter. Fighting was his life, and it was his death; for no evil went unchallenged, and there were evils, everywhere, fighting back.

Only two human beings were, to Brownson, unfailingly perfect. His mother and his wife never made a mistake. His one daughter, Sara, lacked little of being an angel; though he knew that he had spoiled her badly. And there were two institutions against which he never stood. America could not be wrong, though no American was entirely right; the Catholic Church was infallible, though its lay members, and its churchmen, were as human as humanity. The Americanism for which Brownson stood was the essence of a mixed race, toiling in a new wide land to prove possible their common, wondrous dream of freedom, tolerance, ambition, and enterprise. His Americanism is perhaps best expressed in the phrase, "a good neighbor spirit"; and it is most nearly exemplified today, as then, in small towns and among country populations. It can wield an ax, and appreciate a poem; it argues over an extorted dime, and tosses a life's earnings into an approved cause. The Catholicism for which Brownson stood was the Catholicism of Augustine.

He went out to meet controversy by throwing challenge from the lecture platform as a Catholic layman opposing religious prejudice and slavery. Before leaving Boston, Brownson began this work. He would begin his lectures by tracing his own route to erroneous conclusions through faulty syllogistic reasoning. Then, by remodeling his syllogism, after more careful definition of terms, he pointed a direct route to Catholicism. Opposition on such occasions pleased him. The Hecker brothers arranged to bring him down to New York for one such discourse, and later Father Hecker wrote:

"It delights me to know that you will deliver the lecture on the subject you mentioned. Let me remind you of what you know, that if your second lecture tells as well as the first, the future is yours. You can talk to the American people mind to mind, heart to heart. You can stand before your people as an American and the Champion of Catholicity. The reconciliation which has taken place in your own heart between these is to take place also in the nation. Never before had you such a task. The nation's destiny and the interest of God's Church are at stake."

An essay that caused an early Catholic furore was *Authority and Liberty*, which appeared in the *Quarterly* for April, 1849. W. S. Seward, Brownson's old neighbor from Auburn, New York, had, in the month preceding, taken the oath of office as senator of his state. From Boston, Brownson had followed the campaign carefully; the more so as he knew Seward well, and loved him not at all. He learned that the candidate had personally won Archbishop Hughes, and that the churchman's force had been thrown toward the Whigs. Protestant journals saw dangers to the state. Some Catholics saw danger to the Church. Brownson said it was a danger to both. Bishop Fitzpatrick let the article go through. No names were mentioned:

"We need hardly say that we advocate no amalgamation of the civil and ecclesiastical administration. They are in their nature, as we have said, distinct, and the supremacy of the Church, we assert, is by no means the supremacy of the clergy as politicians. We have no more respect for clergymen turned politicians than we have for any other class of politicians of equal worth, perhaps not quite so much; for we cannot forget that they in becoming politicians, descend from their sacerdotal rank. . . .

We have had political priests ever since there was a Christian state, and many of them have made sad work of both politics and religion. . . . What we advocate is her (the Church's) supremacy as the teacher and guardian of the law of God; as the supreme court, which must be recognized and submitted to, as such, by the state, and whose decisions cannot be disregarded; whose prerogatives cannot be abridged or usurped by any power on earth, without rebellion against divine majesty, and robbing a man of his rights."

It is a long article, twenty-six and a half pages of close print; but much of that space is devoted to amplifying and explaining the two propositions above: The power of the Church is in the spiritual realm, as interpreter of the law, supreme; when employed for secular power, as such, it is profaned. Politics, at best, Brownson considers a game of intrigue wherein those who place the temporal demands of the day before those of the spirit, are the most successful men.

It would appear that the Protestant world read, in *Authority and Liberty*, only statements advocating the supremacy of the Church, "as the supreme court which must be recognized and submitted to by the state." And certain of the Catholic clergy read only, "We have no more respect for clergymen turned politicians than . . . for . . . other politicians." Wrath abounded.

Brownson might not be ignored. Neither side relished giving notice and free advertising to his essay; but they felt themselves trapped,—not so that they might not move, but so that they were uncomfortable whether they stood or ran. Both sides were suddenly aware of the presence of a lion, awake and playful if not hungry.

And there was often a vein of amusement just beneath

the surface of Brownson's thought; but his humor is of the sort not easily translated outside the atmosphere of its circumstance. It arises from the dry, British sense of the incongruous; and the cold statement passes for stupidity or solemnity to the uninitiated. When Greene, his publisher, still adamant in his Protestant faith after numerous efforts of the zealous editor, asked what his reward should be for having published a Catholic magazine for a period of years, Brownson smiled: "Once, in a million years, you should be permitted to rest one foot, for the millionth part of a second, upon the coolest spot in Satan's dominion."

And a New York friend had an amusing story to tell. On one occasion when Brownson was visiting him, he and his guest, ignoring an elaborate cuspidor, moved their game table near the fireplace. They thought they were doing nicely; but the hostess, at some inconvenience, edged in between the players and their target to place the silver spittoon at a convenient angle. The host, mischievously, spat past it; but Brownson acknowledged the well intended courtesy: "If you're not careful, young lady, somebody'll spit in that thing."

Though Brownson was gray at fifty, he was still a strong man; and he let no hardship of inclement weather, or uncomfortable travel, hold him from his audience. Thus when in St. Louis, the two factions of the Dred Scott Case held the attention of the nation, and the States Rights party clamored for a series of lectures in December of 1853, his family could not detain him longer than one day after Christmas. Done up in woolens, and scarfs, and mufflers, ear tabs, and a greatcoat, he boarded the train, with two bags, on the Feast of St. John, December 27th.

And it was nearly two weeks before word came back to tell of his safe arrival. From St. Louis, he wrote on the third of January:

“My dear wife,

“I arrived through the protection of the Blessed Virgin and St. John, at this place, on Sunday between eleven and twelve o’clock. I had no serious accident until within eight miles of the city, (I travelled all the way, except six miles, at Lake [illegible], by RR to Alton, twenty miles from St. Louis), when our boat, Altona, ran on a sandbar. In getting off the sandbar, she struck upon a chain of rocks; from these she struck her bow upon a [illegible] which knocked a hole in her bottom, and swung round and struck her stern upon another which broke sixty pins of her timbers.

“She became fast across the channel, with a rapid current, and ice drifting against her with awful force. By means of pumps and buckets at which the passengers as well as the crew worked for some eighteen or twenty hours, till completely exhausted, we kept her afloat for a time; but the frigate sank to her guards. Sunday morning, about eight o’clock, the Ben West could not move; but after two hours’ detention, the Brunetta came along and took us off.

“No lives were lost, and no passenger suffered otherwise than from apprehension, which the general disregard for life in these parts fully justified. For twenty hours, she was twice in imminent danger; for navigation is nearly closed, and the ice could have knocked us to pieces before a boat could save us. And we had no way of getting ashore. But, though running some danger, I suffered only in taking a very severe cold; yesterday was mild; and today is as warm as a mild day in April.

“I give my first lecture tomorrow evening, and my last in this city on Wednesday of next week. I hope to be in Louisville the week following. My friends received me cordially here, and have provided me

rooms in the Planters Hotel, the best in the city. Yesterday, I was out all day, making calls and paying the compliments of the season. I drank any quantity of egg nog, which with a cold bath last night has more than half cured the cold. I am a little hoarse; but not any more ill: and am as comfortable as I can be away from my home, my dear wife and children. I shall not expose myself on the river again, if the water remains as low as it is now. So do not suffer any apprehension. Let Father Strain (? Illegible) say a Mass of Thanksgiving for my preservation, and another for my protection.

“I hope you are well, and that all goes well. Give my love to the boys, and to Sara, and believe me,

“Your own affectionate husband,

“O. A. Brownson.”

Diocesan records mention Brownson’s coming as an event far beyond the ordinary: “Orestes A. Brownson . . . a convert . . . here from Boston . . . four lectures on the work of the Catholic Church in civilizing nations. . . .”

But Brownson was a philosopher at heart, and his mind turned instinctively to intricate problems of right and wrong, of public rule and private conscience. He indulged in the pastime of wrestling with problems of logic, and he welcomed controversy as a maker of publicity for questions under open discussion. His debates in the magazines assumed the nature of a public game of chess. He who joined in the contest must be willing to comply with all of the rules of the game, and admit himself vanquished unless his reasoning could win on its own merit.

For contests were meant to be won, and not given away. Henry remembered a childhood episode in which his father came running to the school grounds, cane in

hand. Someone had told the Doctor that his son was in physical combat with his teacher, and the cane was to have been used on Henry, only that Brownson found him on top in the struggle: "Beware . . . a quarrel; but being in, bear't that th' opposed may beware of thee."

And, though he could admit a mistake, on conviction, there was nothing groveling in his humility. It is told of him that once when he admitted error and apologized for unwarranted argument, his friend acknowledged the apology; and then, as they walked on, he found means of referring a second and a third time to the pardoned mistake. Said Brownson, "If you forgive me again, I'll knock you down." And, likely, he more than half meant it.

In preparing his controversial writings, Brownson studied and wrote through the night, and into the morning; and he admitted no interruptions to break the logical sequence of his composition. Thus, no statement incapable of proof found place in his writings. But though his diction was carefully chosen, a careless reading brought misinterpretation; and an ill-founded challenge brought the irritated bark of response: "Read the page before criticism is attempted."

No rank of Church or state rendered a contestant immune from dire defeat, if he were a poor logician. Men accustomed to deference were not always fair in their treatment of an adversary after being made to appear ridiculous at his hands. Smarting from the humiliation of defeat under Brownson's keen, critical statements, they fostered a secret enmity as toward one who had publicly rebuked or chastised them. Some of them sought and found means other than discussion to break his strength.

Yet, far from resenting intelligent challenge, Brownson relished it. He longed to match brain power in an equal, fair, pleasant, earnest combat. But he could never do this because, except for Father Hecker, he knew few convert

theologians; and born-in-the-faith clergy were not entertained by profound discussions over matters they had never doubted. The minds he met were either too well satisfied with their convictions to enter discussion, too bewildered to follow the sustained reasoning of Brownson's proofs, or too bitter to be reasonable.

They were annoyed at his flair for tearing sermons down for the fun of rebuilding them in syllogisms. It seemed to some of them either that Brownson was trying to show off, which bored them; or, to show them up, which insulted them. After his open break with Archbishop Hughes, Brownson was looked upon as a disturber and treated with less respect and less fairness than he deserved. He felt the general reaction keenly. More than that, he felt a disappointment in educated minds that were content in commonplace talk. But he had associated with every class of person and could adjust himself to any conversational level.

Sometimes, then, he entertained associates with letters received from Know Nothings or Orangemen. They always brought a laugh. He had one from "A Protestant Bible Reader of Montreal" which he carried about for a time. The note was occasioned by Brownson's course of lectures in Canada on the subject: *Why I Am Not a Protestant, and Why I Am a Catholic*. The "Reader" reminded Brownson that he had "sold his birthright for a mess of pottage seven times," and concluded:

"But I must tell you, sir, that if you and Bishop Hughes, Mr. Clarke, Dr. Newman, and Cardinal Wiseman with his paper hat and red stockings, and all the Jesuits from Rome to Montreal, would do all you could, you cannot stop the onward march . . ."

Brownson had a hearty laugh, and he could entertain from his own experience, though he preferred deeper subjects of conversation. The stories came to be bandied

about, and they taught bad manners to some; in fact they established a fad of taking a fling at Brownson if his review of one's book was less complimentary than its author had hoped, if he had offended one's friend, or even if he had done one a kindness. Once "respectable personages" were in the opposition, lesser individuals began to throw vulgar and barbed thrusts.

Everyone loves a contest: those who participate, and those who gather in to watch the tactics of the contestants. Brownson became a man in the general public eye. And Brownson's audience was large; but for the most part more inquisitive than sympathetic. He was not allied with his American public. Italy and France had translated him early. In Germany a Father Schundelen from Spellen, near Wessel on the Rhine, had given to Brownson's controversial essays the ninth volume of his *Collection of Classic Works of Recent English Catholic Literature, Translated into German*. The Bishops' Council of Baltimore praised Brownson; and Pope Pius IX, in 1854, declared, in writing, the high esteem of His Holiness for "that noble warrior-convert."

But the Catholics of America could think of nothing better to do than to discover or invent causes for a quarrel with him. The granite Vermonter knew his own worth; and his estimate of O. A. B. was not a humble one. When he was in his thirties, praise or blame came in the day's work. Then his physical strength buoyed him up despite brief, temporary periods of discouragement; but, in his late fifties, and on through the years, he became more sensitive. Time and worry were teaching him to brood; and there were days in which he did not write a line.

Wherever public praise was granted him, or a spirit of fairness and appreciation shown, he valued the encouragement. Thus in August, 1854, Brownson wrote to the sponsor of the *Pittsburgh Catholic* to express appreciation

for the courteous statement concerning him in the magazine:

"I have just read your article devoted to me, in your paper of last week. For the kind and considerate tone in which you speak of me personally, the tone of a Christian gentleman, and which I have seldom been greeted with in anyone who differed from me, you must permit me to thank you with tears in my eyes. I do not know why it is that my brethren who differ from me, usually express their differences in a harsh, sneering, contemptuous tone, or why they almost always make it a personal affair, and refuse me the ordinary courtesy due from one gentleman to another, . . . I have worked hard, I have studied diligently, and I have always acted under advice, and never published an article written by myself without first submitting it to the Bishop, or to a theologian appointed by him to examine my articles, except now and then a literary criticism or my literary notices."

But moods change; and whether the editor of the Pittsburgh paper had his mind changed for him by someone else, or whether, on receipt of Brownson's letter, he became convinced that he was being seen in company with a lone wolf, is impossible to say. At any rate, his next act was a right-about-face. He did not reply to Brownson's letter; but in the next number of the *Pittsburgh Catholic*, he answered it publicly as though addressing an enemy. Among other accusations, Brownson was made to seem, not as one who meant to declare himself submissive to authority, but as one whose purpose was to shirk the responsibility of his articles by hiding behind a great name:

"We do not see the necessity of throwing the whole odium which attaches to this or any other article, on

the Bishop, who, we think, never meant to assume any greater responsibility than what might arise from the assurance that the *Review* contained nothing contrary to faith or morals. Nothing more than is implied in the approbation which a Bishop may give to any periodical, and whether the Bishop of Boston may continue to pronounce on the merits of articles before publication or not, it is better for Mr. Brownson not to shirk from bearing the whole responsibility alone."

Either Brownson had a genius for making enemies, or Weed's master mind was directing many forces to break the man. Brownson was the only person capable of serving the Catholic Church adequately in the field of publicity and instruction; he was the only person capable of withstanding the combined attacks of organized bodies from without the Church. It is difficult to grasp the sincere and persistent hatred that he won from Catholics for his pains. If critics could not blame an act which he performed, then they declared that his motive for doing it must have been evil.

The foreign-born clergy took personal offense at a statement in Brownson's essay on *Native Americanism*: "Naturalization is a boon, not a natural right." They stood as a body with Archbishop Hughes to protest Brownson's lament that there were not sufficient American-born priests to reach a certain large body of Protestant American citizens who felt the double prejudice of dislike for the foreigner, and fear of the Catholic. This two-fold bias was a fact, not a fiction in the mind of Brownson. It was true that earnest souls evaded and avoided investigation of Catholic doctrine because of one or both of the reasons that Brownson pointed out. The man, in making his appeal for native students for the priesthood, intended to

wound no one. When criticism reached him, he spoke in his own defense:

"I have been surprised, I confess, at the manner in which my article on *Nativism* has been understood, and at the whirlwind of wrath it has raised up against me. I have re-examined my motives in writing it; I have re-read the article itself in the light of newspaper comment on it to see if I had by some blunder said what I did not mean. . . . Either I can not understand the plain natural sense of my language, or they [his opponents] do not. Which is the mad and which the sane party, I shall not undertake to decide, for I might be out-voted like poor Tom of Bedlam."

The learned Austrian Jesuit, Rev. F. X. Weninger, of California, wrote Brownson a lengthy epistle in Latin. In this he protested the nationalism of Kossuth that he detected in the article, and begged the author to watch against the likelihood of becoming another Lamennais. Brownson responded in English in a letter that his son thinks was never sent because Father Weninger had given no address. One paragraph of the uncreased manuscript is the following:

"Indeed, Reverend Sir, has not the foreigner rather than the theologian dictated your letter to me? May you not have failed to put yourself in my position, and to consider what it was necessary and proper for me to say in order to prevent my non-Catholic countrymen from drawing from my words a false inference with regard to Catholicity?"

The response never reached Father Weninger, but the good priest was fair; and as soon as he found himself mistaken in his first judgment, he wrote a Latin epistle from which we translate a paragraph:

"Most honorable Christian, and most respected master in Christ! I do not know whether my letter reached you, most respected master, in which I showed my rather sharp judgment concerning your reference to foreign citizens. Twice since then you have explained more clearly, with new illustrations, the double meaning of the principles referring to the question, and I rejoice."

Father Weninger, S.J., was acting for the truth and the Church; and, if he had been mistaken, a remedy was possible. He would write a second letter and alleviate the pain he had given by the first. But such an attitude was not general among Brownson's opponents. There were those who, having misunderstood him, had committed themselves to print in the matter; and they were determined to make the editor admit that they were right in their judgment of him. He must at least say that he was sorry for causing them to think. . . . Brownson finally concluded to do nothing about unfounded tempests in teapots except to say, "Read it again." He directed attention to the fact that the cold print of his statements remained as, and where, it had been from the first. Inquirers might re-read at their leisure.

But those who took time only to half-read articles before pronouncing against them were but further insulted at the suggestion that they could not gain the full meaning from a printed page in a single perusal. The Reverend N. J. Perche was one of them. His countryman, the Abbé Adrien Roquette, was covered with confusion because of Perche's childish protest, and he wrote the editor:

"I cannot longer resist the desire to write you, to give evidence to you of my high esteem, my enthusiastic sympathy, and my entire agreement with the doctrines which you have stated in your *Review*. Your article on *Native Americanism* was necessary. I have

not found one blameworthy syllable; the publication of that article was an act of high courage."

Many native Irishmen were inclined to condemn the paper outright, because it had carried "a challenge to foreign-born priests." But a few, both lay and cleric, read the article without finding insult from the convert American. Mr. M. R. Keegan, an Irishman in Wisconsin, thanked Brownson for his valuable magazine, and expressed his agreement particularly with that section of *Native Americanism* in which the author speaks of ill-chosen leaders whom the Irish in America followed in great number:

"I am forty-five years old, twenty of which I have been in this country; have mixed largely and seen much of the character of my countrymen, and have always seen with regret that the body of Irish Catholics were led by the nose by such as the *Boston Pilot* calls 'Kawtholicks' composed of Masons, Odd-fellows, and office hunting demagogues. This class of person has, in public matters, in this country, taken the place occupied by the priest in Ireland, so far as the Irish are concerned. . . . The Irish are so accustomed to having leaders that they know not how to do without them."

But Keegan was only one, and he represented a small portion of the Irish. In the majority, the article roused a feeling of antipathy and deep prejudice against the author. They declared that he had been a Protestant and that occasionally his Yankee sympathies would get into print despite his attempt to be a good Catholic. They supposed Brownson to hate the foreigner, as did the Know Nothings, and to begrudge immigrants the right to make a livelihood. The fertile soil, far away from the landlord with his unjust tax, was as good for Catholics as

for Puritans. The question seemed to them to be no question at all. They would follow those who understood them, and who wished them well. Thus were Catholics led to misinterpret the warning of an astute mind who saw them herded to the polls to vote against their own interests.

Instances could be multiplied, no end, to show that essays of power were torn apart by factions, and rendered useless by the focus of attention upon a distorted item or phrase. Paragraphs, isolated from the context, were held as witnesses against him. Upon Brownson, the effects of such attacks were various. Sometimes he talked with Sally, and with the family, in the self-righteous attitude of one believing himself a confessor of the faith:

“The Catholic publicist who has a moderate share of intelligence, and who loves the Church, and burns to recover for her the position she has lost . . . feels it his duty to direct the attention of the Catholic public to it, and that, too, although he well knows the application of the remedy belongs to the spiritual chiefs of the faithful, not to him, or to the laity. . . .

“Was there ever a saint engaged in active duties, and dealing with the world in his own times, the ignorance, the vices, the crimes, the sins he found amongst Catholics, at whose words and deeds, even good men, priests, bishops, and cardinals, did not for the time take more or less offense? . . . The Church here is the Church militant, and every child of the Church must be always an armed soldier, doing battle somewhere, against some enemy. How, then, from the simple fact that offense is given, conclude that he who gives it is in the wrong, rather than they who take it? A time may come when they shall ‘look upon him whom they have crucified and mourn.’ . . .”

Such chanced to be his mood when he received a letter

from the Right Reverend J. McMullen, Bishop of Chicago, condemning the essay *The Right of the Temporal*. "I dislike it very much," he said. And he further declared no desire for a reply in the matter. Brownson broke two pens getting started on the unwelcome response:

" . . . With us Americans the clergyman, whatever his rank, is the minister of the law. . . . We respect him for his office, not the office for his sake. . . . This, sir, is a trait of American character that Europeans do not fully understand, and which they seldom treat with respect. . . . This is a predominant trait in myself, and hence the writer's censures affect me less than he probably supposed they would. Man to man, I hold myself his equal, whoever he may be. He must show me that the law of which he is the minister censures me. . . ."

But when Francis Patrick Kenrick, Bishop of Philadelphia, wrote him concerning the letter which appeared on the back cover of each *Brownson Quarterly*, the editor was as docile as a child. The cover-letter was one of encouragement from the assembled bishops to Brownson. Bishop Kenrick presented himself, "not as a superior or director so much as a friend," to say that the Know Nothings construed the statement as a formal approval of the Church upon every sentiment or view which Brownson expressed in his columns. He ended:

"I earnestly desire that your *Review* may be supported, as I am fully convinced of your zeal in supporting the cause of the truth. I leave, then, the matter entirely in your hands, and renew the expression of my unfeigned regard."

In the issue of the *Review* next following the receipt of this letter, Brownson appended a note in which he de-

clares himself solely responsible for all matter in the pages of his *Quarterly*:

"We notice, with pain, a disposition among our Know Nothing writers to hold the bishops whose names are on the cover of our *Review*, responsible for whatever sentiment or doctrine is found in its pages. This is wrong. The bishops have kindly encouraged the publication . . . believing it on the whole useful in the cause of truth; but they endorse no sentiment or doctrine we advance. . . ."

Religious controversy had reached such a frenzy at mid-century, that only brave men dared open debate; and the statements of persons other than Brownson met infuriated response. Bishop O'Connor of Pittsburgh, for example, made a few broad statements in a lecture on *The Influence of Catholicity*. They were true; and he knew that Brownson would know upon what foundation the truths rested; but he had no room in his busy mind for details of proof. Yet he had found that no fact was established, here, by the mere statement of any human being.

Brownson received a letter from Bishop O'Connor, written hurriedly, and in evident anxiety:

" . . . I have got myself into a regular scrape . . . Besides the small fry, two of our biggest guns have divided between them the labor of attacking me. The chief man in the Presbyterian Theological Seminary is to come out with a reply next week. I must take the liberty of requesting you to assist me in supporting some of my positions. I hope you will have no difficulty in laying your hand . . ."

He was consulted as regularly as an encyclopedia, and valued in only the same way. Men did not feel in his debt, though he was tireless in serving them. His re-

sponse to this letter is a double page of foolscap. He saved the prelate's face, but no acknowledgment was received; and, within three years, the same churchman publicly condemned an essay of Brownson. The *Quarterly* made no response, but the editor addressed a discouraged letter to the Bishop:

“. . . treated me neither generously nor fairly . . . I think I have received hard treatment . . . excited an uncalled-for prejudice against me. . . . denounced me, held me up to execration, instead of discussing the question with me. . . . opposed to me, if I understand . . . opinions, or an opinion, condemned by John XII, and Pius VI. If I understand . . . [O'Connor's essay] denied the right of a Pope to visit the political acts of a secular prince, with ecclesiastical censures, which I think is not sustainable. . . . The disposition of many Catholics appears to be to recognize as little solidarity with me as possible. These are not pleasant things. But God knows what is best; I will not murmur. . . .”

Know Nothings and his Archbishop hurled invectives at him with equal force. Looking across the waters at the Tractarian Movement, wherein, for the most part, controversy was carried on with the courtesy of a gentleman's game, he was moved to write of Cardinal Wiseman:

“We cannot read these essays on the Oxford controversy without something like envy of their illustrious author; not, of course, for his talents, his genius, his erudition, his courteous manner, and his graceful and dignified style, for these are far above our humble aspirations; but for his public, for the men he had to refute, and bring within the pale of truth. He had a great and important movement setting toward the Church to deal with, conducted by

men with mistaken views indeed, advocating, in itself considered, an absurd and ridiculous theory; but sincere, honest, and loyal, well bred, cultivated, eminent for their abilities and learning, who were too much in earnest to be cavillers, numerous enough to make it an object to address them in gentle and hopeful terms. . . . One could so treat these men as to refute their errors and retain their respect, and even secure their affection."

All of Brownson is in that paragraph. The man could be reconstructed from those sentences if little else were known about him. The Oxford controversy, viewed from America's side of the Atlantic, was a real contest in depth of perception, logical ability, perseverance, and the skillful use of words. It satisfied Brownson because its manner was courteous, and the lines of reasoning seemed to be drawn as true as a draftsman's die. Whereas the turmoil, in which Brownson was immersed, had the manner of a surly broil in which a victim had been named; and a mob-hunt was on. Men above him pointed derision. Small men, before him, behind him, or on either side, barked ill-feeling, and snapped at his heels. There is no logical answer to a stroke in the face, a yelp, or an unseen treachery. He was worn out.

While his correspondence shows his personal suffering under the unfeeling treatment of those who should have been his support, his printed word carried no revenge, no bluster. He remained the careful historian, and the careful logician. He was never blinded to the real questions at issue because of the sting of an antagonist's lash.

Not all was bitter. There were a few understanding souls whose letters were treasured, though the experience of receiving kindly correspondence was rare.

Bishop Francis Patrick Kenrick of Philadelphia in one letter reported to the editor: "It will encourage you to

know that your article 'Church or no Church' has led a physician (I cannot recollect his name) to embrace the faith at Georgetown, as Father T. Mulledy assured me." He tells of three other conversions in this letter, but suggests "of these facts it is better to say nothing in the papers."

Among the correspondence most deeply appreciated at this time was a gentle monition from the Right Reverend J. H. Leurs, of Fort Wayne, Indiana. He was a strong man who was also humane and peaceful; and he wrote to persuade Brownson to more ingenuity and discretion in his labor for the Church. His Grace assured the editor that he had followed the *Review* since its first issue, and that he meant to continue its friend. But he warns Brownson, for the sake of his great mission of spreading the truth, to guard against harshness in its expression:

"I think, however, that it might do still more good if at times you were not so unnecessarily severe, more guarded in your expression, and intent not only upon what you say, but also in the manner in which you express it. The age is blind, weak, and full of self-love. It cannot bear the rod or digest strong food. . . . Hence in advancing a question, we must not only ask: 'Is it true?' but also, 'Is it expedient?' 'Are those to whom it is addressed in a proper condition to receive it?'

"For the last six months and more I have spoken to several bishops, priests, and others, your friends and well-wishers, and they all desire . . . to see you drop for the present all of these irritating questions which have been the source of so much calumny and personal abuse against you. . . ."

And the good bishop suggests a number of subjects that would not involve nationalities, and yet would be within the profound realm in which Brownson loved to work. He

begs him not to lose courage. These and other well-disposed protests caused Brownson to announce that no article would appear after January, 1861, which did not meet with his personal approbation.

The volume comprising the issues from January, 1864, to and including the October number of that year, is called his *National Series*. Brownson left questions of the Church out of this set. Following the advice of Bishop Leurs and others, he filled his pages with the vital questions of national import, and avoided dispute on matters of religion and philosophy. At this period appears a sheaf of letters from such men as Sumner informing him confidentially of State matters and of appointments before they were made public.

The editor of the *Chicago Tribune* wrote him immediately on the appearance of his *The President's Message and Proclamation* (given December 9, 1863). This essay grants high motives to Lincoln's extraordinary assumption of power, but challenges the constitutionality of the Chief Executive's determining, without consulting Congress, the terms by which the South may be forgiven, reorganized, and readmitted to the Union. The act extended the president's war powers into a hypothetical civil-action-period. As a precedent, this could eventually lead to a reducing of the functions of Congress to zero:

"Your January number of the *Quarterly Review* ought to be placed in the hands of every member of Congress, and in the hands of the President and his Cabinet. Your article on the amnesty, if read by them, will prevent a fatal step. . . . It will cause the error already committed to be retraced or healed by timely legislation."

Other occasional friendly letters arrived. Bishop Elder of Natchez wrote in a communciation dated December 18, 1860: ". . . Fortitude is not enough. We must be

ready to learn from . . . censures." Brownson thanked the Bishop, but he complained that other prelates had not seen fit to treat him with like courtesy, and declared that they had denounced him through their official organs and opposed to him not reason or law but popular prejudice:

"Archbishop Hughes tells me that I am responsible not only for my own meaning, but for the meaning that others without warrant deduce from my language. . . . No bishop condescends to write me . . . wherein he thinks I am wrong. . . . You and the Bishop of Fort Wayne are the only two who have done it. . . . The first communication is, Stop my *Review*. Now, I do not think this is fair. I commenced my *Review* as a Catholic *Review* at the request of the bishops. I have wished to conduct it in a manner acceptable to them. . . . I am no heretic, I am no schismatic, but an obedient son of the Church, and no word of any Bishop addressed in his own hand to me but will receive from me due respect. . . . They would find that the *Review* would in its humble way respond to their wishes. The difficulty lies in the fact that they rely on the weekly press to set me right; but, for that press, I have in general no respect. . . . My *Review* speaks to the whole Catholic world . . . I have written to you as an old friend, and I have shown you my heart. I will only say that while in Boston, I followed the direction of the Bishop of Boston. I cannot accept the Bishop of New York as my consultor. His advice I cannot respect, and I am not under his jurisdiction. But for him there would have been little of the difficulty that has occurred. . . . Forgive me if I have said anything wrong."

Several times the editor considered discontinuing his

*Review.* He had moved to Elizabeth, New Jersey a disheartened man; and the magazine reflected his spirit. Among the flood of letters, accusing and abusing the great controversialist, came a few encouraging notes from sturdy friends. Father Walworth's letter follows:

"The immediate motives which concur to bring my pen to paper just now are these. I think I see in the last number of your *Review* some symptoms of gloom and discouragement, whether proceeding from physical or mental causes I cannot well judge. . . . And permit me to say—there never was a time when I listened more earnestly to hear the sledge-hammer blows of the *Review* or felt more confidence in its power. . . . Go on then in the name of God, with a light heart, for the sake of the many great and holy interests, and also for the sake of many young men [again the youth of America] who, like myself, have learned much from you already, and rely on you for the future. . . ."

Brownson employed controversy as at once the greatest public agent for his philosophy of life, the very source of some of his deepest thought, and of his best products of literature. In both types of contest, Brownson the man is revealed. Without his encounters one could never have discovered his depth, his fairness, his mettle, his strength, his ability to forgive injustices, the human kindness behind his bluster.

Some of his debates were within the peaceful realm of passing discussion wherein questions involved no more than opinion; but most of them were heated contentions involving strong claims and noble defenses. Brownson's reasoning in every conflict followed the lines of strictest logic; and his diction was accurate to a hair's breadth in precision of meaning. His interests were wide in scope. Toward no vital topic of the day did he feel intellectual

unconcern. To high-sounding phrases and the evasive word, Brownson opposed erudition and truth, absolute.

These qualities and others attracted the admiration of a fearless French champion of unpopular causes, Charles Forbes René, Comte de Montelegant, who wrote:

“The Marquis de Valdegamas, M. Louis Veuillot, M. de La Tour and myself have conceived the plan of a *Catholic Quarterly Review* for Europe and the whole Catholic world, published in French and at Paris, as a central point of all that is good and bad in our present state of society. . . . If you could ever become a contributor . . . and allow . . . your essays . . . we should be very grateful.”

Brownson was many-sided and he was great. He remains an example of a man of strength, of scrupulous honesty, of a bigness of soul that could endure slights, deep-planned and treacherous, without ever stooping to fight in unfair advantage, without ever resorting to falsehood or quibbling. His personal power rested in the fact that his practical life was based on what he declared to be his convictions: that God and right are infinite.

## Men of Oxford

THANKLESS as was, from the first, Brownson's self-appointed task of general monitor, he continued in that position. As long as there remained what seemed to him dangerous tendencies in politics and in religion, Brownson could not rest without attempting to halt them, without trying to direct men and influences. It was inevitable, then, that he should cross swords with some members of the Oxford Movement.

There was much kinship between Brownson and Newman. Both had known child reveries with God; both felt a life-long need for the truths of religion; both sought to serve its cause through influence upon the growing mind, and both possessed convictions rather than opinions. But there were many differences between the two men. Newman was brought up in an organized church from which he never dissented until he stepped into Catholicism. Brownson was without church affiliations as a child, and he tested sect after sect before he found the Church. For a grasp of the whole, Newman re-pieced fragments of the truth. Brownson went down to infidelity, swept all his beliefs away, and then worked up from zero by his sheer power of reasoning.

Too, Newman had grown up amidst admiration and ease. He knew little about the hardships in a less fortunate stratum of society. Brownson made a deep study of political science. Newman did not. Brownson's personality irritated. His very four-square righteousness offended. He possessed an ever-readiness to spring at the throat of an

opponent whether he were a friend, a casual acquaintance, or an enemy. This was not true of Newman. However, either might have written the following paragraph taken from Brownson's *Lacordaire and Catholic Progress* written in 1863; for it is true of both:

"Doubtless, there were many errors in what we had previously written, but we had always, even in our days of greatest darkness, held great Catholic principles, and our errors were less errors of principle than errors of fact, and were the result, in the main, of defective knowledge, chiefly of historical information."

Both were interested in the mental processes by which persons gain inspiration and truth. Many of Brownson's treatises on intuition remind one of Newman's *Grammar of Assent*. Their methods of analysis differ. Brownson founded each of his lines of thought upon careful syllogistic structure. Any careful reader, as he rounds difficult turns in Brownson, can trace the actual form of the syllogism as truly as he can see the steel trestle under a railroad track at curves in the Rockies. Newman, on the contrary, often assumes the reader's acceptance of an unexpressed major premise.

But in the discussion of identical problems, their style, as well as the matter of their essays, is strikingly similar. *The Scholar's Mission*, first spoken before the Gamma Sigma Society of Dartmouth College, in 1843, has many paragraphs that might fit into Newman's *Idea of a University* as an unchallenged integral part. This is also true of Brownson's *Necessity of a Liberal Education*. From Brownson's definition of a scholar, consider:

"The scholar is a grave, earnest-minded man, who lives and labors for some high and worthy end,—a man who will pore over the past, survey the present,

search, 'by sea and land each mute and living thing,' . . . break forth in song, strike such music from the human heart as shall tame savage beasts and make the very stones assume shape and order in the walled city; . . . but all and always for some high and solemn purpose, some true and noble end for which he counts it honorable to live and sweet to die. . . ."

The texture of that paragraph is not unlike one of Newman on the master of science:

"Rising in his strength he will break through the trammels of words, he will scatter human voices, even the sweetest, to the winds; he will be borne upon nothing less than the fullest flood of sounds which art has enabled him to draw from mechanical contrivances; he will go forth as a giant, as far as ever his instruments can reach, starting from their secret depths fresh and fresh elements of beauty and grandeur as he goes . . . ; but . . . is it not certain . . . if he would do honor to the highest of subjects, he must make himself a scholar, must humbly follow the thoughts given him, and must aim at glory, not of his own gift, but of the Great Giver?"

Brownson says:

"Literature is never to be sought for its own sake: the end of a scholar is not to be a scholar; but a man doing that which cannot be done without scholarship. . . ."

Newman's illustration of the same thought might have been incorporated into the Brownson text:

"The bodily eye, the organ for apprehending material objects, is provided by nature; the eye of the mind, of which the object is truth, is the work of discipline and habit."

When Brownson is found in more forceful mood, he is likely to "demand" where Newman would declare "a need"; but both write with equally convincing strength. Speaking for a reform in democratic government, Brownson wrote:

"We demand a state of society in which every man's rank shall be measured by his capacities, intelligence and virtues, and where the intelligence and virtues shall be as nearly equal as the diversities of men's natural aptitudes will admit. There must not be a learned class and an unlearned, a cultivated and an uncultivated, a refined class and a vulgar, a wealthy class and a poor. There shall not be one class owning all the funds and another performing all the labor of production. . . . There shall be all

Speaking for a reform in church government, Newman wrote:

working men but no proletaries; . . ."

"What we need for our present Church's well-being, is not invention, nor originality, nor sagacity, nor even learning in our divines, at least in the first place, though all gifts of God are, in a measure needed, and never can be unseasonable when used religiously, but we need peculiarly a sound judgment, patient thought, discrimination, a comprehensive mind, an abstinence from all private fancies . . . in a word, Divine Wisdom."

Brownson's first public recognition of the Oxford group was before Newman's entrance into the Catholic Church, even before his own conversion. In the first number of the *Brownson Quarterly Review*, in January, 1844, he discussed *Tracts for the Times*:

"Regarded as a question of outward organization,

and canonical communion, the claims of the Church of England to Catholicity, on her own admitted principles, do not appear to us to stand on any better footing than those of any other Protestant communions. . . .

“The effort, at this moment, should not be to effect outward unity, and canonical communion, but to recover the significance of the church itself. . . . We do not look upon the movements of these Oxford divines as indicative, on their part, of a wish to return to Rome, as their enemies allege; they are far enough from being Romanists; they are undeniably Church-of-England men; but they are possessed of a sentiment that will be found too big, and too expansive, for the Church of England. . . . It is a great question; an agitating question . . . a terrible question which will not pass over the world without changing its face.”

By July, Brownson was writing:

“We have watched this movement with alternate hope and fear; but alas! at present only the fear remains.” [For he had suddenly come aware of the fact that] “the civil power in England is, and must be, Protestant. . . . We see no hope for the Anglican Church. . . . We do not see how our Oxford divines can justify . . . the English Church in separating from the corporation . . . if they assume unity of the Church as a corporate body. . . . Protestantism must . . . convict the Church herself of heresy, before it can justify itself. . . . Before what court can you try her? . . . By impeaching her, you deny the only tribunal competent to take cognizance of the accusation you bring against her. . . . If we must have a Church, and cannot have one without returning to the Roman communion, then, let us go to Rome.”

Such assertions caused little comment from American readers, and no notice from Oxford; for Brownson's successive challenges to his own former beliefs had become recognized as his habit of thinking. These sentences were rather more extreme than any he had written; but, it was believed that his convictions lagged, somewhat, behind the statements. Not so, Oxford's reception of Newman's parallel conclusions, a year later. Not all the baying hounds were in America, it appears.

In fact, although Brownson did not know it, a bitter reaction had been manifest in Oxford on the appearance of *Tract 90*, wherein had been affirmed that the Thirty-Nine Articles of Faith were not in contradiction to the prescribed beliefs of the Catholic Church. That was in February of 1841. Three years later, Ward published the *Ideal of a Christian Church* in which he identified all that was Roman with all that was Catholic, and proceeded to apply the test to the Church of England, "which could ill bear it."

Oxford became immediately divided. Some, like that ever-welcome, joyous, challenging force, W. G. Ward, who declared "Credo in Newmannum" to be his one sole article of faith, were ejected from their fellowships. The Pusey-Kingsley group expressed their bitter disappointment in the converts to Catholicism by a multiple attack upon their insincerity.

Profound investigation had satisfied Newman that the Catholic Church claimed, not alone life, but the power to answer nineteenth-century questions as well as those of the first. Weighing that conclusion, Newman explained, as he saw it, differences in the expressed doctrines of the Church as it moved through the centuries to his time.

*An Essay on the Development of Christian Doctrine*, expressing the great English convert's views on the subject, reached Brownson within a few weeks after its publication. He started reading it before dinner, and it was

difficult to dislodge him from the book. When he did appear, it was with the *Essay* in his hand, and a refutation of it volleying forth down the stairs ahead of him. Through the meal he kept it open before him, and he read paragraphs from it aloud while he ate mechanically. Sally admitted that the idea was new to her and that Newman's conclusion seemed different, in an essential, to Brownson's concept. He read aloud:

"That the increase and expansion of the Christian Creed and Ritual, and the variations which have attended the process . . . are necessary attendants on any philosophy . . . ; that, from the nature of the human mind, time is necessary for the full comprehension and perfection of great ideas."

Sally ventured that the interpretation might be right. That sentence was a diplomatic error in view of the fact that she had planned upon both clearing the table, and getting to bed before twelve o'clock midnight. Mrs. Brownson did interrupt her husband's discourse long enough to hear the children's sleepy prayers and prepare them for bed; but Orestes had lost none of his ardor during the delay. On the contrary, he reopened the discussion with a new vim.

He took exception to the statements that the Christian creed had *expanded* in the Catholic Church; that *variations* are *necessary*; and that *time* is a necessity for the *perfection* of great ideas. These, as applied to the Church, signified to Brownson's mind a notion of growth of doctrine. This struck him as dangerous, in an extreme degree, because inexact and misleading. He paused to quote from an article written by an obscure theological student:

"All historical development in the Church . . . consists in an apprehension, always more and more profound, of the life and doctrine of Christ and His apostles."

And, while he was discussing the differences between the two expressions, his eye rested upon the very phrase "growth of doctrine." He began reading aloud again:

"We shall find ourselves unable to fix an historical point at which the growth of doctrine ceased. Not on the day of Pentecost, for St. Peter had still to learn at Joppa about the baptism of Cornelius; not at Joppa . . . for St. Paul had to write his epistles; not on the death of the last apostle, for St. Ignatius had to establish the doctrine of Episcopacy; not then . . . for the canon of the New Testament was still undetermined. . . . The Church went forth from the world in haste, as the Israelites from Egypt, 'with their dough before it was leavened, their kneading troughs being bound up in their clothes upon their shoulders.' "

This did not seem to Brownson to refer to a growth in theological science, a variation or expansion of outward discipline, but that there had been in the teachings of the Church itself real variations of *doctrine*, an increase and expansion of the Christian creed,—a real progress of the Church in her own apprehension and understanding of the sacred deposit of faith committed to her charge, and which she had received the command to teach all nations even to the consummation of the world. Brownson believed that the Church was not a developing and growing organism, but from the first a complete and unchanging creation. There was then a subject for contention with a member of the Oxford group; and he prepared to throw challenge before the high intellect of John Henry Newman.

With the resolution to see Bishop Fitzpatrick in the morning, he read the *Development* minutely once more, taking copious notes. The result of his interview at the Cathedral Residence was an appointment to refute the

paper. Bishop Purcell also wrote against it in *The Cincinnati Telegraph*. Brownson's first challenging essay was directed against only the one article; then, in a few weeks, he met an echo in Spencer Northcote's *Fourfold Difficulty of Anglicanism*. Immediately, it became apparent to him that the development idea was at the base of a school of thought at Oxford,—that the recent English converts from Anglicanism had carried with them false doctrine. This was tragedy and must be amended.

W. G. Ward, he who started the "Credo in Newmannum" reply at the Oxford Convocation, was editing the *Dublin Review*. He was eleven years younger than his leader. He and Newman had many things in common. Both were from cultured families; both were musicians of talent above average; both knew the same persons, and discussed problems from much the same angle. Ward's rugged elegance of style shows him to be also of the Newman caliber. What he did, he meant to do thoroughly; and it was his aim that a corporate union might be effected between Anglicanism and Catholicism.

For that reason, as well as through sympathy for Newman personally, Ward hoped that there would be raised not too much furore over the question of developmentism. He dreaded to see a well-disposed man discouraged so soon after he entered the Catholic Church; and it pained him to see the sincere and earnest Newman attacked over what seemed to him a trivial matter. He recognized Brownson as a person, like himself, who could revolutionize circumstances if he set about it. He felt, in an agonizing way, that if Newman saw, condemned, the conviction by which he had found belief in the Catholic Church, he might be thrown back upon himself again, and lose trust in the present Church. Ward saw Brownson's point; but he wished to leave "well-enough" alone. Newman possessed the Church with its gifts of the Mass and the Sacraments. If he had found it through a wrong

route of travel, that was a past issue. Why disturb him, now, by challenging his method of obtaining it? Ward threw himself in, as a buffer, between Brownson and Newman, determined to prevent tragedy. In a confidential letter, he assured the critic that Newman had no purpose to establish a school, or to do anything irregular within the Church. Why implant an uneasy feeling, in the convert's mind, through which the blessings of the Church might slip from his grasp?

Brownson's response was kindly. He was deeply touched by the allegiance and comradeship implicit in Ward's letter. He had no desire to elbow another convert back toward the door of exit. He did not wish to humiliate or punish Newman. Above all, he would hope not to discourage the man; but the fact remained that someone had a duty to persuade that leader of men in England of his mistake. It was necessary for Newman's own sake that he be put definitely, and finally, upon the way of exact truth in the matter of relationship between the Church of the Fishermen and the Church of the nineteenth century. That relationship between the Church founded by Christ, and the Church of Brownson's day was absolute identity; and any idea contrary to that was not only false, in itself; but it could lead to many false conclusions.

Such conclusions were inevitable; for Newman's mind was not static, and an erroneous inference at the beginning of a long line of progressive reasoning was far from trivial. Newman's type of mind must be convinced to complete conformation with Catholic doctrine. Furthermore, there were others to be considered. Newman had followers and adherents who must not be injured by his defective doctrine; for the Oxford teacher would be a leader while he lived. And his mistake was not a light thing, but an error in the intrinsic nature of the Church.

Furthermore, in his *Review* for January, 1847, Brown-

son had said, in introducing Henry Major's *Reasons for Acknowledging the Authority of the Holy See of Rome*:

"We are also pleased to see that Mr. Major is a simple-minded convert, who comes to the Church to be taught, not to teach, and is willing to take the Church as she is, and on the grounds on which she has hitherto been taken. He brings her no theory or ingenious hypothesis of his own, laying it at her feet, and modestly assuring her that it will give him great pleasure to find his thoughts on the same subject coincident with hers. We like this."

The editor had not mentioned Newman's name; but there is reason to believe that Brownson had him in mind. Ward interpreted the barb as aimed at his friend, and protested:

"The idea you seem to have formed is that he [Newman] has devised a theory in a wanton sort of way, as a sort of intellectual exercise, instead of submitting himself humbly to the teachings of the Catholic Church as he found it. I cannot but think that a statement of some of the facts of the case will induce you, in some degree at least, to modify this opinion."

Ward traces, at length, the profound study and evident sincerity that carried Newman to the Church. Then he refers to earlier writings of the same trend that remain unchallenged by anyone, and enters a plea for silence in the matter, lest, through condemning Newman's reason for entering, one might "shake his whole Catholic faith to the foundation." Ward continues:

"I cannot but feel it an *extreme injustice and cruelty* that Catholics who were silent when he was searching in their direction for some way of escape, should afterwards, when he had found a way for himself and actually brought himself to the Catholic

Church by help of it, be loud in their objections to the legitimacy of that way. If this be not the right way, why did they not, years ago find for him some other?

"This observation, my dear sir, cannot be supposed to reflect upon yourself, because you were not, I believe, at that time a Catholic. But I do think that all who find fault with his theory, should ask themselves this plain question, 'Except for this theory, how could he possibly have become a Catholic?'

"Here, then, I confess, I *do* think Newman has some right to complain of *your* treatment of him. Here we have a person of ability and thought, who has devoted himself to the study of the Fathers, and who is most anxious to find in them all possible agreement with the present Catholic Church, and yet *cannot*, for the life of him, read them any other way than as being either discrepant or ignorant, on various matters which are now ruled to be points of Catholic Faith. If on the one hand it is historically clear that the Catholic Church of the nineteenth century is the lineal heir of the Catholic Church of the fourth century, it is equally clear historically (so he thinks) that the doctrine of the first named church is in many particulars an addition upon the doctrine of the last named. . . ."

Brownson read this letter through, and then again. He could not agree that developmentism was a thing to be condoned; yet he wished not to be over-exacting. He approached certain bishops and priests on the matter; and found it impossible to arouse intense interest. Not that the clergy were indifferent to the Church, but that they had formed the habit of evading Brownson puzzlers when they could. For a discussion with Brownson on a theological question was work. It revived memories of their final

examinations in the seminary. One left it humbled, weary, and covered with a cold perspiration.

His local friends dodged the issue; but, a letter to Rome brought back a decisive reply from Father Glover:

“The whole deposit of faith was delivered to the Apostles, once for all; and all that it implicitly contains admits of no increase or growth. . . . Now there can be no doubt that the Apostles were enabled, on the day of Pentecost, to expound . . . any dogma to its utmost extent . . . But it does not appear that they did so, whereas their successors have developed explicitly many truths which were implicitly contained in the original deposit. . . .”

With that paragraph at his back, Brownson could be dogmatic in the matter. And while he calls Ward his “dear brother,” and while he uses no harsh phrases, he insists firmly that,

“The Church can have no ages. She is *one* and Catholic in time as well as in space; and, like eternity, she has duration, but no succession. You must go to her, as she is today, to know what she taught before the Council of Nice, no less than to know what she teaches now. If you assert the alleged discordance, it must be on her authority. . . . If she tells you so, that is enough; she then confesses her own fallibility, abdicates her throne as the Church of God, and you need no theory, for none can save her.”

Ward defended his first contention in two lengthy *Dublin Review* articles. Brownson answered each of them with some impatience. Richard Simpson wrote from Clapham to Father Hecker:

“I think posterity will judge of their quarrel as it has done of that between Plato and Aristotle; that the latter although the most acute and the most for-

mally logical, has failed to see what the former intended, and has therefore misapprehended him."

And that was true. They did not understand each other. Even where Brownson grasped the meaning, if Protestant America was likely to misinterpret a sentence, he tried to insist upon a re-statement. For instance, the Oxford men repeatedly spoke of the Catholic Church as being, "a loyal supporter of the monarchy." Brownson picked the phrase as one that would make dangerous prize propaganda in the hands of the Know Nothings. They would use it as proof enough that the Pope of Rome was but awaiting a chance to help throw the reins of American government back to England.

For that reason Brownson begged the *Dublin Review* to state the fact in some such words as: "The Catholic Church supports the legally established government in any nation." But the statement was written for Englishmen, not for Americans, to read; and the Tractarians persisted in making local statement of a general fact. They argued that if someone needed the use of it, elsewhere, let that person transpose it for his own purpose. Brownson pronounced their attitude, "insular arrogance."

Of the Oxford group, W. G. Ward was, in nature and mind, more akin to Brownson than were any of the other members. These men had in common a magnificent robustness, a crusade spirit, and a worthy consistency despite apparent contradiction. Both marched forward with gallant stubbornness, through all weathers, under overhanging fears, and in the glorious sunshine of assurance. Both edited magazines that set a standard in their day. Each respected the other's mentality; each irritated the other.

In 1860, when Ward's *Nature and Grace* came out, Brownson attempted to review it; but he stopped in the midst of it to write his son that he had set himself the "most

difficult and perplexing job." He acknowledges Ward to be an able man, speaks of the high regard that he feels for the *Dublin Review*, and yet admits:

"He is often well nigh unintelligible to us. We are frequently at a loss to know what he is driving at."

Many years later, in another letter, Brownson expresses his exasperation with even more vigor:

"We acknowledge his ability and his learning; we love and honor the man; but somehow or other, we can hardly read a page of his writings, no matter on what subject, without having our patience tried, or our irascibility excited, we should say, our pugnacity aroused, and we want to fight him, metaphorically, not literally. . . . His philosophical articles are to us unintelligible as Dr. Newman's *Essay on a Grammar of Assent*, of which I can make neither head nor tail. It is our fault, we presume; for we have so long been accustomed to proceed from the universal to the particular, and to using particulars only as illustrating a universal . . . that our mind cannot get out of its old grooves so as to understand the logic that from the particular concludes the universal."

Nor was W. G. Ward delighted with Brownson. Neither did he find it possible to follow the American's method of reasoning. In a letter to the Rev. Robert E. Guy, O. S. B., Ward wrote in August, 1860 to say among other things:

"My own feeling about Brownson's doctrine is this: Those whom you call the psychologists are quite certainly wrong; their philosophy is nothing better than contemptible. On the other hand, Brownson's formula deserves to be true; it makes such an admirable foundation and is all sufficient. But I have never been able, to my regret, to see a particle of evidence for its truth. . . . I am very confident myself that the whole view

about founding all knowledge upon the principle of contradiction is utterly unsound. The "psychologists" are very fond of basing truths upon that principle; but I really believe it quite opposed to Brownson's theory. I should like you to ask him. . . ."

It was years before Brownson saw eye to eye with Newman. The cause of the change is not clear. Did he now read a more welcome meaning into *Development* because of a phrase that he had perhaps overlooked in 1846? It lay between two parts to which he had raised objection:

" . . . and that the highest and most wonderful truths, though communicated once for all by inspired teachers, could not be comprehended all at once by the recipients, but, as received by minds not inspired . . ."

In 1864, he wrote, in an essay called *Explanation to Catholics*:

"We hold that our reason was born as free as theirs, [St. Thomas and St. Augustine], and that the theologian of today has all the freedom of thought and right of investigation that any of his predecessors had. We hold this not from pride or obstinacy, . . . but because it is true, and the principle cannot be surrendered without great injury to both faith and science.

"Faith, objectively considered, is infallible, and the Church is infallible, by the assistance of the Holy Ghost, in teaching and defining it. But faith is to us practically as if it were not, save in so far as it is actively received and appropriated by our minds. This, we presume, is what Dr. Newman meant when he said: 'Christianity came into the world a naked idea, which the mind develops or realizes by its own action.' Now in realizing, in actively receiving and appropriating the Christian dogma, or the faith, our minds are not infallible. We never conceive it ade-

quately, or take in explicitly, all that is in it; and we may, and often do, under various aspects, even misconceive it. Here is, if we understand it, the basis of Dr. Newman's essay, and, if so, our objections to it were irrelevant, and though well founded, as against the doctrine we deduced from it, they are not as against that which the author held, and intended to set forth, and perhaps did set forth to the minds of all who admired his book. We have long suspected that we did him an injustice, though we have not changed our own views of the soundness of the theology we opposed to him, or thought we were opposing to him. The fact is, his book was profounder than we supposed and was designed to solve theological difficulties which we had not then encountered in our own intellectual life and experience. This acknowledgment, spontaneously made, we hope will be accepted by the illustrious convert and his friends, as some slight atonement for any injustice we may have done him or them, since whatever injustice we may have done was done unwittingly and unintentionally. . . .”

Spaulding, on visiting Newman, asked his impression of Brownson. Said the great man, “I thought that there was only one opinion in the matter. He is by far the greatest thinker America has ever had.” In fact, Newman was so impressed with the mentality and force of Brownson that, despite their controversies, he invited the American to a chair in the Catholic University of Dublin: the translation to reality of his *Idea*. Newman's letter marks Brownson's highest satisfaction in intellectual attainment:

“Sir:—You will not be surprised that the persons engaged in the task of starting the new Catholic University of Ireland, should betake themselves to the United States for aid in doing so, or that they should

direct their eyes toward a writer so well known as yourself. . . .

"I am asking the like favor of Dr. Döllinger of Munich, and others of similar distinction. . . . The year proposed would be that running from the autumn of 1854 to the autumn of 1855.

"You are the first person to whom I have applied, and hoping I may succeed in my object, I am, Sir, your faithful servant.

John Henry Newman, of the Oratory."

The letter was balm to Brownson's discouraged soul. He was in the midst of the Hughes controversy, and welcomed the thought of an ocean between him and New York. Sally glowed with pride. Orestes had been really discovered. But Brownson was disturbed about the future of his *Quarterly Review*. Henry would have to be recalled from college in Germany. With direction for a time, he should be able to carry on the work.

Lord Acton, sent to the continent by the editorial offices of the *Edinburgh Review*, wrote a lengthy letter prompting Brownson to permit nothing to deter his acceptance of Newman's offer—not so much for Brownson's sake as for those whom he might serve in the newly appointed position:

"I have just returned from England where . . . I was told . . . by some of Newman's friends that he has written to you to request your cooperation in starting a Catholic University. . . . The vast field of philosophy will be yours, and you will have an opportunity of making philosophical questions familiar to a nation barely acquainted with them, and I thank God for the fortune of my countrymen in being initiated in that magnificent science by you of all men living. . . . I am intimately acquainted with Newman's friends, and I know the immense price they attach to the prospect of an alliance with you in this

work. . . . Nobody can give it such an impulse as you. . . . You alone can prepare us for the great controversies by founding among us a school and arming it with the principles of a sound philosophy. . . . Your intercourse will be as an infusion of new blood in many societies, in Dublin, in London, in Paris, and in other places. . . .

“Long before Newman wrote you, when I used to recall the happy hours I spent with you at Emmitsburg and at Boston . . . the idea came constantly into my mind that it would be a great thing if you came over to Europe, and particularly to Germany. [The letter was written in Munich]. . . . Your writings, your conversation, and your individuality have afforded me matter for long meditations.”

Lord Acton had assumed, very naturally, that Brownson's invitation had been to a chair within the field of the Doctor's most notable gifts. But Newman's letter had included the paragraph:

“The subject which I would propose to your acceptance would be one of such surpassing interest and breadth that I am often surprised it is not put more prominently forward in collegiate establishments. We never omit a professorship of astronomy; but how much more fertile a subject of thought is the subject of geography! [Could Newman have heard that Brownson knew all about Greenland?] Viewed under its different heads, as physical, moral and political, it gives scope to a variety of profound philosophical speculations, which will at once suggest themselves to your mind. . . . This is the subject I offer to your acceptance.”

This fact, Brownson reported to Acton; only to receive the advice that he accept the position, and talk about whatever he would, when he arrived. Catholic journals in America expressed their satisfaction at the offer tendered

Brownson. But he, himself, was not satisfied that he could fill a chair of geography; and he wrote declining the invitation. A second letter from Newman, written, this time, from Harcourt Street, Dublin, offers a choice of subjects better suited to Brownson's taste:

" . . . Of course it disappointed me that you did not see your way to assist us in the University in the way I pointed out. Theology and metaphysics will, I suppose, be given by the Bishops to Ecclesiastics. The Philosophy of History is already in the hands of a man of ability and name. It has struck me that you would not be disinclined to take the chair of *Philosophy of Religion*, or of the *Evidence of Xtianity*, or of the *Notes of the Church*, especially as viewed in reference to the needs of this age. This would open . . . fields of *logic* and of history. . . . Would not the subject you mention of *Civilization* come into it . . . ? As to the politics of the *day*, I suppose it will be our prudence to abstain from so exciting a subject. . . ."

Brownson accepted this offer immediately; but by the time his letter arrived, there was reason for Newman to withdraw or modify his previous invitation. From America, letters other than Brownson's had been addressed to Newman:

" . . . By the same post, I received letters from different places which have perplexed me very much, as well as surprised me— . . . But I will neither delay my answer, nor be otherwise than open and straightforward in what I have to say.

"I am urged then, now for the first time, in quarters to which I cannot but listen, to ask you whether it would be inconvenient to you to postpone your visit here, on the ground of some offense which happens to have been taken *just now*, in America, and, I believe, in Ireland, at something you have lately written.

"It will be a serious loss to us, if you cannot take

part in our undertaking; and I know I have no right to suppose you will consent to come at all, if I take a liberty so great as to ask you to postpone your coming. But still I must take things as I find them; and, since it rests with me to do what is at once unpalatable to me in itself and apparently uncourteous to you, I think it best to state the case as it really stands, trusting that I may not, besides my own disappointment and inconvenience, have the additional misfortune of disengaging you.

“I might offer some mere excuse for proposing a postponement, but I think you will be better pleased. . . .”

The situation was not new to Brownson. The original protagonists in the process of opposition to any project which might offer opportunity to Brownson were Weed, Archbishop Hughes and Bishop Purcell. Things had so developed that now Weed need not do much about them. It might have been necessary to direct attention to the news item, “Brownson may accept Newman’s offer of a Professor’s chair in the Catholic University of Dublin.” Bishop Purcell may have stumbled upon the word himself. At any rate, Brownson placed the blame in Cincinnati, and said in his reply:

“. . . I am censured severely by a distinguished prelate, (who appears before the public as your ardent admirer), for having written against your *Essay on Development*, when he himself urged me through the Bishop of Boston to do so. . . . I say then very frankly that I am certain that it will be for your comfort and for the interests of the University to have it understood that I am under no circumstances connected with it.”

Newman answered from a watering place, Mount Salus, Dalkey, only fifteen days after Brownson had written:

" . . . Your welcome and generous letter came yesterday, and I lose no time in answering it.

"I cannot prevail on myself to give the coup de grace to an arrangement which I still hope will not come into effect. . . . There are so many changes in men's minds; and public affairs are at present in that uncertain state, that it is not at all improbable that our present difficulty may blow over, and when it has done so, I should have been vexed to have committed myself. I shall not fill up the Professorship which I offered to you, and we will see the turn things take. At the present time I do not mean to say a word to inconvenience you, or to oblige you to consider it a suspended engagement, or to hinder your entertaining a renewal of my proposition as a really *de novo* matter.

"What you say about *Loss and Gain* has given me heartfelt satisfaction. . . ."

That letter completed the correspondence between the two greatest nineteenth-century minds of England and America. To be sure, it was only a dream-field-of-influence to which Brownson had been invited; for the full substance of the University itself never materialized. Students of Brownson are interested only in the reaction of the man to the discovery that he was caged, to the realization that a net of influence designed to curb his freedom had been deliberately woven, and successfully closed in about him. To break that net would injure more than himself. His attachment to the Catholic Church held him silent, when he could have written an essay that might stir the world. It was Mrs. Brownson's task on such occasions to calm the strong man, and to remind him of the gifts of peace that the Church itself had given him, though he seemed ever destined to battle with its churchmen. Not Catholicism but Catholics annoyed him to the end.

## The Old Doctor

WHEN Civil War crashed in 1860, there were three Brownson sons of war age. Ned was only seventeen. He and his father were to content themselves with finding expression of their patriotism outside of battle, since one was too young, and the other too old. At once, there fell a gloom and an excitement upon the house; an impatience and a fear. The masculine side of the family expressed themselves in terms of duty and the country's need. Sarah and her mother saw danger, pain, and death coming into their own family.

And the troubles were not all of one kind. A letter from Aunt Thorina, in Balston, reported Grandmother's illness. Orestes guessed the reason to be worry, and hoped that there was no organic cause; for his calendar was, with brief intervals, written full for the month. Unless things took a more serious turn, he would send Sarah and Sally. The strain of Francis's going (Brownson always called Henry F., Francis, even in his prayers) and letters from the other sons, had left his wife and daughter in need of getting away. He got them off with the brave assurance that there was no need to return before they had taken a real vacation. Ned had a swarm of friends; and he, himself, would be lecturing most of the time. But in little more than a week, he had written Sarah a letter, and was writing a second to Sally:

“We are quite well and get along well, except myself. I am about as fidgety when you are gone as they

say you are when I am gone, and though my health is well enough, I shall not be worth much till you return. I really did not know before, how necessary you are to me, and that I really am nothing without you. Yet I wish you to stay where you are as long as you continue to improve, or you and Sarah find it agreeable. Edward will go after you some time next week, and you can regulate his stay. He must be at Fordham the first week in September, and suppose you will want a little time to get his things in order. But you must take your own time.

“Margaret [the cook] is quite well, and does so-so, though like myself a little lonesome. Nobody has called except. . . .”

And then Brownson directs the best route home:

“In coming home come by Troy. The boats are not quite as elegant as the Albany boats; but you will have no shifting of cars or baggage. Take your ticket at Balston, and checks for baggage to New York. Take the last train from the Springs, about 7 P.M. the boat waits for it, and arrives in New York in season for the 8 o'clock, or at latest the 9 o'clock train to Elizabeth. You may by coming so late not get so good a state-room as you might wish, but you must run your chance like other folk.

“Patrick has done nothing yet to keep out the water, and I presume will not. Even my refusal to pay rent does not stir him up. The garden [always an important item in each of his homes] prospers. I have had two roses from my bush; and Sarah's pinks blossomed finely.

“I expect Professors Barry and O'Leary this week to see me, and Harry McDonnell and Fordy Gordis to see Ned. Ponto [the dog?] is the greatest sufferer—for the want of something to eat.

"I hope Mother is getting better. I am sure you find her a dear old lady, and Thorina is a dear good sister. My love to both of them, and to my own dear daughter. Take all the comfort you can, and get some flesh on your bones, and let me see you hale and hearty when you get home. . . . Write to me, and believe me your

"Savage but affectionate husband,  
"O. A. Brownson"

The letter reveals a man utterly lost without his family about him, and a man devoted to the finer things of life. What did he do with the two roses that he cut from his bush? Put them on the table, or on his desk? Is this the Brownson who is pictured as such a boor?

There were always callers at the home. In an old newspaper clipping in the scrapbook of Brownson's granddaughter, Mrs. Odiorne, one finds the comment:

"It was a wonder how Dr. Brownson contrived to work at all. To anyone who called he was always at leisure. . . . Yet he read everything. . . . Much of this personal history will doubtless be made known to the public by his son . . . [But Dr. Brownson's work], simply looked at as manual labor, is enormous. And there is the wonder of always findings such a man at leisure. Perhaps it was that his mind which was extraordinarily swift and sure and far-reaching caught, in a flash, things which it took others time and labor to reach."

That social side of Brownson is remarked in many, many letters; but perhaps that of Father Philip Birk, the Passionist, is more revealing than any:

"I know things about him, and things that would interest his admirers, that probably even Henry never

knew. In the month of October, 1865, a few months after my ordination, I preached a sermon in the parish church of the Doctor in Elizabeth, N. J. The Dr. was one of my hearers. I knew it, and the knowledge gave me a decidedly uncomfortable feeling. After Mass, the Dr. called at the rectory, and expressed a desire to be introduced. . . . At his invitation, I took tea with him that evening, and we chatted till midnight, while Henry and the pastor's nephew were playing cards in an adjoining room. That was a long conversation, but not as long as another we had some time later; it began at one, p.m.; and we kept up, with a short interruption, for supper until three o'clock, a.m. As we were about to retire, the Dr. said: 'Now you know more about me than does any man living. Bishop Fitzpatrick of Boston, knew what you know, but he is dead.' I was a frequent visitor at the Doctor's house, which had a room which he called Father Philip's room. I was living at the time in our monastery at West Hoboken, N. J. For whatever little mental culture I have, I am indebted more to dear old Dr. Brownson than to any other teacher I ever had. He taught me how to think; and it was his desire to help me that made him take so much interest in me. I am an old man now. . . . My end cannot be far off. When it shall please God to call me hence, may I have the happiness to meet the dear old friend. . . . I wonder whether we shall then discuss questions of philosophy. . . ."

Such conversations filled the day and the early hours of the night; then, when his friends were exhausted, he began his writing. A sleepless old neighbor said that he never looked out the window at night, "but what the old codger's light was still burning."

The two friends who called most often were Dr. Henry Hewit, and Judge Wm. Jewett Tenney. In 1861, Brownson said goodbye to the landlord who would not keep his place in repair, and moved into a satisfactory residence called Hetfield House—the property of Judge Tenney. It was a three-story building. The second floor was devoted to the Doctor and his library. Books lined the walls, and were stacked upon the floor. The grounds afforded a large garden, and extended down to "The Landing" where boats came. Brownson loved the location, and despite his gout, and the ache of his eyes, he spent much time planning and planting.

Ned was less interested in the beauties of the place than were the other members of the family. His mind was upon one thing, War. He followed the news of every section, and he counted the days until he would be twenty, and could join the recruits. Finally he went, at nineteen.

On an occasion when he returned home, Sarah's friend, Miss White, was her guest; and she gives us a vivid picture of the close-knit union in the family. Sarah had taken her to her room, and had remained for a time chatting before going on to her own. Miss White remembered that she had left a book below on a table; and she slipped down, quietly, to get it. There was only the light of the fire-place in the room, and no sound. In the glow of the logs, had been drawn the two chairs occupied by Orestes and Sally; and their youngest, proud in his army uniform, but still a little boy, sat on the floor with his head in his mother's lap. The desire to read had left Miss White. She went back without her book.

Henry was in the 3rd Artillery stationed in the Army of the Potomac. When Hooker faced Lee in Chancellorsville during the first days of May, the Brownsons knew that Henry was under fire. Sarah wept, as though certain of some impending calamity, and wrote a long prayer in her book of devotions, dating it May 3, 1863:

“When those who survive shall take up the dead,  
may they be found ‘facing the foe,’ as soldiers love to  
die. May no stain of cowardice ever sully their name,  
and when those who love shall hear of their loss,

Have mercy on them, O Lord!

“In the first shock of grief, uphold them by Thy  
grace, let them be resigned to Thy Will which has  
bereft them; give them a just pride in those they  
loved, and when memory presses their loss hard upon  
them,

Have mercy on them, O Lord!

“For the sake of those who have already given their  
lives for us, for those whose bones now whiten many  
a battlefield,

Give us peace, O Lord!”

The prayer continues; and it includes mention of those who suffer in hospitals, “those who hear the music of gentle spring for the last time,” broken hearts, crushed spirits, and “lips that must know no smile for many years.” For the sake of them all, and for the prayers “daily lifted to Thee in North and South,” Sarah prays, “Give us peace, O Lord!”

And then, on the morning of May 4, the day after that dreadful feeling of depression came upon Henry’s sister, word arrived of his death. It was believed that his body was with others charred by the fire raging in the forest and underbrush which formed part of the battle ground.

Brownson became a dynamo of energy. His mind saw Francis, the little boy that needed his father,—not Francis, the man and finished scholar, whom he had recalled from college in Germany to take charge of the *Quarterly Review*.

The father put grief behind him. There were practical things to do. First, he cancelled an appointment with a doctor in Boston who was caring for his eyes. Wires

buzzed. Investigations moved. He discovered that his son lived; that he was severely wounded in the leg, and that he was a prisoner of war at City Point. Exchange of prisoners was arranged; and Brownson was a guest of General Dix when the boat carrying his son to Annapolis stopped at Fort Monroe to take Orestes Brownson aboard.

The soldier, suffering intensely, and conscious, was begging the doctor to save him from amputation, when he saw his tall, powerful father standing beside his cot. That meant assurance. Brownson promised the lad to take care of the situation and bring him home. He wired the Commissary General of Prisoners as soon as he reached land; and he learned that action would be taken only on receipt of a surgeon's certificate. Brownson's language became colorful. He telegraphed the Secretary of War, waited what he considered a fair period of time; and, receiving no answer, took the responsibility upon his own shoulders and removed the patient to Elizabeth, New Jersey, on May 23.

From his home, Brownson wrote Stanton, explaining what he had done, and why. The Secretary sent an immediate reply, as follows:

War Department, Washington, D. C.  
May 28, 1863.

Dear Sir:—On receipt of the intelligence that your son was at Annapolis, immediate orders were given that he should be furloughed to return home. No condition of any kind was directed, and no one had any right to impose a condition upon my order. There is no impropriety in your having taken him home, that being in conformity with my own wishes. The order giving him a leave of absence will be repeated, and a copy of it forwarded to him. His leave is for thirty days. At the expiration of which time he ought to re-

port the condition of his health, and it will be continued from time to time as his health may require.

\*Rev. O. A. Brownson  
Elizabeth, New Jersey.

Yours truly,  
Edwin M. Stanton.  
Secretary of War."

Mrs. Brownson and Sarah nursed him well; and both scolded him soundly for making so light of the year-old wound in his shoulder, and the shell-scar on his head. Sarah was President of the Soldier's Aid, and busy about many things; but her mother worried, constantly, lest she overdo. She was out at teas, rowing parties, and rides—the one spoiled member of the family. Brownson made special mention of her in all letters; and it was for her that the Healy portrait (frontispiece), was done. She was attractive, and slender, with a vein of real fun in her make up; and serious things could not hold her spirits down.

In a letter to a friend, she speaks of the experiences of Henry, and of Ned, ending her comment with the following sentences:

"Everywhere was one cry of indignation at the slaughter of our men. . . . Since we are making up a rowing party to spend tomorrow, I wish you and Miss Brooks were here to go with us. Wouldn't we have fun? Congress adjourns next week, and Mr. Sumner, (My adoration you know.) will come to see us. . . . If he were ten years younger, I should take special pains with my toilet, and 'read up.' . . ."

By the July following Henry's enforced furlough, young Ned had earned a commission. He wrote from Pleasant Valley near Sandy Hook:

\* It was twenty years since Brownson had left the ministry; but he remained in the minds of many, "Reverend O. A. Brownson."

"Dear Mammy,

What a tremendous flush of victories the paper of today announces! I doubt if we shall soon fight again; so don't be afraid. Meade did the best that could be done. The rebels were strongly entrenched, and strong enough to defeat us if we made the attack. Our army is worn out almost. We left Williamsburg today. . . .

I wish Father would have Mr. Stanton sign my commission while he is in Washington. If he is still there, will you ask Sal to write him at once about it. . . . Yours affectionately, Ned."

In July, too, a half-confirmed rumor became current among the clergy and on December 29, 1863, it became generally known that Archbishop Hughes, who had been ailing for a year, could not recover. The great churchman died on the following January 3; and *Brownson's Quarterly Review* for January carried a lengthy article entitled simply, *Archbishop Hughes*. In it Brownson said:

"Archbishop Hughes was a man of action rather than a man of study, and he kept his eyes open to almost every movement at home or abroad that seemed likely to affect in any degree, favorably or unfavorably, Catholic interests. . . . The Archbishop was supposed to be fond of power, and he certainly watched with a jealous eye every individual or combination of individuals that threatened to become too strong for him to control. He would suffer no one among Catholics to acquire an independent power. But, though we personally suffered from the jealousy with which he guarded his own authority, and perhaps had some right to feel aggrieved at his occasional public criticisms, we are sure that he was not moved by any inordinate love of power, or by anything but his clear conviction, and let us add, just

conviction of the danger for its ordinary control, or which, if assuming the attitude of opposition, might create embarrassment for authority.

... "His mind was broad and comprehensive, and he seemed to labor to gain for the Church a . . . position in the country, which she was entitled to, indeed, but had not hitherto enjoyed. . . . Hence he accidentally strengthened *their* [non-Catholics'] false pretence, that the Church is simply a political body, aiming at political power. . . . He undoubtedly did labor to secure to Catholics, through political or legislative action, the practical enjoyment of the equal rights and freedom of conscience guaranteed to them by the Constitution, but which an . . . anti-Catholic public opinion denied them. . . .

"On this point, his experience had made him extremely sensitive; and so sensitive, it is possible, as sometimes to lead him to suspect individuals unnecessarily, but from no vulgar principle or motive. He knew a bishop's authority in his diocese . . . cannot be resisted or impeded without the gravest injury to religion; and that it is the duty of the bishop to maintain his authority. . . .

"All we ever contended was that an American on his conversion to the Church is not required by his religion to renounce his American nationality; and that foreign nationalities, domiciled on American soil, should treat his nationality with respect. . . .

"But he misapprehended us . . . when he supposed that we aimed at anything more than to assert that an American, although a Catholic, has as good a right to be an American in America, as an Irishman has to be an Irishman in Ireland, or a Frenchman in France; and that it is the duty of all foreign settlers . . . to recognize and respect that right.

"Time and events have proved that he was right in

many things in which we thought him wrong . . . and it is not for us to say that he was not always right, wise, and judicious. We are laymen, and not judges of episcopal administration. . . . We certainly cherish the memory of the late Archbishop as that of a large-hearted man, in most respects an eminently great man, and a prelate of rare energy and activity, untiringly devoted to the interests of religion."

This January issue, 1864, was the first of his National Series. In it Brownson avoided anything that might cause worry to Catholics. He made no discussion of Church issues; but began what the title of the series signified—the exposition of State problems.

But the year 1864 was to be the darkest in Brownson's life. His family melted from him. On August 13, Ned wrote his mother a note from City Point. It was a letter of condolence upon hearing of William's death; and, said he, like an old man:

"God be merciful to him now. That he had time to prepare to die was a great blessing for him. . . ."

Brownson's mother died in September, and Ned was killed in battle on October sixteenth. Brownson had aged notably since May of the previous year. Daily, hideous reports had brought anxieties that broke his nerves. His son says of him:

"He was certainly disheartened; and it seemed as though he never again could have the strength to combat opponents as before. He was only sixty-one years of age; but he looked and felt half a score older, and believed it was time for him to rest, and he said, in the Irish expression, to 'make his soul.'"

And yet it was only a year and a half since he had displayed his old fire and resourcefulness in rescuing Henry,

without a sign of age upon him except his graying hair and beard. But now he determined to discontinue his *Review*; for he was no longer able to take the battering repercussions that followed each issue. He had blundered again, politically, in attempting to advertise Fremont as candidate against Lincoln; hounds were baying on all sides; and grief had taken all the old fight out of him.

In the farewell to his readers, in the October number, 1864, Brownson mentions the death of his two sons almost simultaneously, and that the body of one, as he wrote, lay in an adjoining room. In his *Explanation to Catholics*, Brownson referred to the various accusations which he had read against himself during the few years previous. Speaking of his views he said:

"Wrong they may be, unCatholic in intention we know they were not. We have never, since we became a Catholic, written a line that we regarded as unorthodox, and not intended to serve the cause of the Catholic faith and civilization. From our youth up we have loved Truth, and wooed her as a bride, and we wish to die in her embrace. We have never adhered, from pride or obstinacy, to any opinion we had once entertained. . . . We submit our writings to the judgment of the Church . . . we will modify, alter, or retract . . . as she shall prescribe. . . ."

From this date Orestes A. Brownson lost much of his old courage. Again and again, the old warrior spoke as though his life of usefulness was a finished thing. He could not know that he still had twelve years to live; and that he would yet revive to write some of his most forceful and profound essays.

The *Review*, then, did not appear in January, 1865. The editor forms a pathetic figure as he finally decides that he is unequal to the burden of the *Quarterly*. The director of the School of Journalism in the University of Iowa writes:

"Brownson's situation at this time (1864-1865), has some of the elements of high tragedy. Undoubtedly he was in many respects a great man. He was utterly sincere, and intellectually he was the peer of any American; but his very honesty and frankness made him the victim of continual petty attacks from those whom he expected to be his chief friends, and now he was torn between love of Church and love of country. A large man in stature, he felt his physical powers declining. His sons had been killed in the war; darkness closed about him. He was an old lion at bay."

That was his manner under attack; but when help was asked of him, he was a different person. He never refused. A new educational body called the Sisters of the Holy Cross had set up an academy at St. Mary's, Notre Dame, Indiana. Mother M. Angela Gillespie, looking about for the best, solicited and received the aid of Orestes Brownson in compiling a set of books which she called the *Metropolitan Readers*.

Brownson had led as busy a life as had any of his bustling contemporaries; yet he looked back over his sixty-one years, sometimes, with a definite sense of failure. He would sit for hours alone, or in conversation with Sally Healy Brownson, turning over and over events in the immediate or remote past. Sometimes the panorama looked like one long series of insufficiencies, frustrations, and quarrels. Yet he found pleasure in retracing his early search for religious satisfaction, his eagerness in the acceptance of the offering of each sect in turn, and his rest, amid storms, within the old Church that he had investigated latest. He told Sally:

"They [the sects] were each too light for my hand. When I saw the light reflected in their fabrics, I thought them strong enough to try; but my quick grasp tore them."

As together they reviewed the difficult years of disputes, worries, and conflicts, they discovered a scene fascinating even to themselves. It held deep valleys of fertile labor, mountain heights of attainment and applause, and a precipice or two, marking where lightning out of a storm of criticism had crashed at the very feet of Brownson. His perseverance through it all, Orestes credited to his ever-understanding wife, and the grace of God which her daily attendance at Mass brought to the family. Mrs. Brownson's reply was practical and true. She knew that his own prayers were both humble and devout. She knew, too, that no personal trial could drive him from the Catholic Church. "Leaving it, where might you have gone?" The question brought a quick smile followed by silence for a long while.

But after all the suffering, through tragic misunderstanding of his motives, through the joys of his occasional small triumphs, he saw no approximate fulfilment of his childhood dreams. Men of poverty remained poor men, in the land of plenty. Few youths were yet able to distinguish values for themselves. They had not, generally, learned to think in straight lines, to use precise words in expressing such ideas as they had, and to reason with the simple instrument, the syllogism. Some could applaud right conclusions; a few could choose worthy leaders; but none could themselves discover truth, and they could not break a path for others to follow. The rich were growing richer with every cycle of time. Hollow pretense was still standing in high places, guarding itself from the possibility of comparison with real worth.

And, thus, Brownson told himself that he had failed of his purpose. A few times in his life he had been content with the numbers and depth of his followers; but, on each occasion, some unforeseen obstacle had run in between him and his friends. Either he had discovered that he was leading earnest minds in the wrong direction; or, when

on the right course, he had felt an unseen power binding his wrist and ankles with strong silken webs, toward the prevention of effective, independent action.

Then, in declaring his error, or in breaking his fetters, his gestures of impatience were always so violent as to frighten his newly made friends away; or to make them distrust him. It was distrust that broke Brownson. He was a very sociable being; and yet a man of solitude, an untaught man, and a man of genius. Especially, his loneliness marked him. He had, all his life, stood singly, and hungered for companionship with ideally-minded human beings. His loneliness for God had impelled him, through years, to delve into religious and philosophical study.

The presence of an ideal within a great cause, or within a man, drew Brownson as lodestone draws steel. The greater part of his strength and energy from his nineteenth year to his forty-first had been spent in attempting to satisfy the torturing, secret unrest of a homesick, hungry inquirer. Seeking that ideal had been a passion with him. He had longed to talk of it, to hear the experiences of others, and to share his findings. He had always needed trust, as other persons need light and air.

Thus, he complains somewhere in an address to foreigners, he was more lonely in his own homeland, where there were none to talk to, than they were, far from the shores of their native land but surrounded by neighbors who believed and thought with them. Brownson was of larger mental and spiritual stature than the usual individual; and he spoke a language foreign to the thoughts of many. He was alone in their presence.

The immediate cause for loss of confidence in Brownson in 1864 was his having sponsored the name of Fremont as a Radical Republican candidate against Lincoln's re-election. Lincoln had been nominated in the Republican caucus in Baltimore. James W. White, a former judge of the Superior Court of New York, went to Washington to

consult a committee of men interested in a divided party. He wrote Brownson from the Willard Hotel expressing preference for Chase above Benjamin B. Butler or John Fremont. Chase immediately declined the nomination; but Fremont pledged himself to the Radical Republican Party.

Brownson had accepted Ned's opinion of Fremont. Edward had been on the General's military staff; and with all the enthusiasm of a young soldier, he had written home of the fearless man's greatness, as he saw it. The editor trusted his son's report; furthermore, he had met Mrs. Fremont, a woman of exceptional persuasive power. He had learned Fremont's opinion of Fremont, also.

Anyone who had heard the current reports of Fremont, during his brief period of authority in St. Louis, could have warned Brownson that the nomination would be a mistake. It was said, there, that the magnificent headquarters of the General might be approached only through a chain of California friends whom he had appointed as his secretaries, and whom he paid well. When Lexington was besieged, so the story ran, the messenger who had been sent for re-enforcements had to wait four days for an audience.

But no one called "wolf"; and Brownson accepted the composite picture of unusual proportions as a fact. On the strength of the delusion, he lent his support once more to the wrong man. Fremont was nominated in Cleveland on May 31. Sumner, and other political friends, sent new lists of subscribers; and Fremont, himself, added one thousand personal subscriptions for the *Brownson's Quarterly*. That magazine carried, in July, an essay entitled, *Lincoln or Fremont*. It exposed the dangers underlying the grant of immediate suffrage to slaves, and it showed other catch-vote promises of the Seward-Weed managed Republican campaign, exaggerated the General's military ability, his judgment in matters of law, and in interpretation of technicalities in the Constitution. Lest the blunder fail in com-

pleness, he presented the man as a bundle of energy and activity.

The candidate's political enemies were delighted to find such satisfying matter for cartoons and for caricatures. Fremont found himself pictured with a halo about his head while he strode over cities, rivers, and states, like a giant sowing prosperity. Furthermore, he found all his secret acts spread upon the open pages of Democratic and Republican papers; and he could not endure to go through the campaign. He actually withdrew from the contest without a word to his most staunch supporter.

Brownson's letter to Sumner of the U. S. Senate, dated January 17, 1865, explains his position by adding an unpublished reason for stepping out of the editor's chair. It also discloses his plans for the future:

"Having suspended my *Review*, I know not . . . any right to assume to be of importance enough to trouble you with any scribbling of mine. My *Review* died of Fremont. Had I not supported the "Path-finder," or had he not withdrawn, and left me in the lurch, I should have continued it, and I hope to be able yet to resume it. I stopped it because I had sacrificed my position, and had no party to fall back on. I voted in the election, as I suppose you did, for Lincoln's electors, for after the disloyal resolutions of Chicago, I had no alternative.

"I am busy writing a book [The American Republic] . . . Under the head of *Tendencies and Destiny of the Republic*, I expose the dangerous tendencies among us, and end with a vindication of our system and our national character. In it you will find my latest and best thoughts on the subject, and all I have hitherto written on it that I wish to be judged by. It will be my political testament, or my legacy as a citizen to my country. . . .

"If my friends succeed in what they are attempting to raise, an annuity, this work, if Providence spares my health, strength, and reason, will be followed by a work on Philosophy, another on Theology, another on the Church, and another on the Catholic and Protestant controversy. . . .

"Is not this pretty well for a man to propose to himself in the sixty-second year of his age? But the materials are all collected, and the greater part already written, and nothing remains to be done but to throw the whole thing into shape, and give it the finishing hand. So you see I do not mean, old man as I am, to be idle." . . .

Brownson's *American Republic* was published in 1865, and carries an inscription to the benefactor whom he had hurt deeply by his essay on the *Laboring Classes*. Reaching back twenty-five years, he dedicates this great work:

"To the Honorable George Bancroft, the erudite, philosophical, and eloquent historian of the United States, this feeble attempt to set forth the principles of government, and to explain and defend the constitution of the American Republic, is respectfully dedicated, in the memory of old friendship, and as a slight homage to genius, ability, patriotism, private worth and public service."

He wrote, besides the *American Republic*, a continuous chain of essays for the *Ave Maria*. They were religious articles, written for his own satisfaction, as much as for the instruction of the readers of the magazine.

The Very Reverend Edward Sorin, C.S.C., founder of the University of Notre Dame, solicited his contributions for the *Ave Maria* during the first year of its existence. The articles have been collected under the head *Saint Worship* in Volume VIII of Brownson's Works. Of them Father Sorin wrote:

"You have given us excellent articles, of which a number of persons have spoken in high terms, even the editor of the *National Quarterly Review*, Mr. Sears."

But even in his final years, Brownson was not to walk without armor. In one of these articles he used the phrase, "As God is, in His essence, triune." Again the author was accused—this time of "formal heresy." Again his name was referred to Propaganda, and again this deliberating body found "nothing in it not strictly orthodox."

Besides the *Ave Maria*, Brownson was busy with the *Catholic World*, at first only nominally as a translator, and later as a regular contributor. None of the articles was signed, but they were recognized as his by those who had read him for years. Archbishop McClosky, the new Archbishop of New York, was pleased with Brownson's treatment of the school question and appointed him as the one best fitted to answer in the *Catholic World* certain criticisms by *Putnam's Magazine* referring to *Our Established Church*. Leading articles in the *Tablet* were contributed by Brownson during this period, and an occasional essay in the *American Quarterly Review*.

But the man had become enfeebled with his years. He had lost energy through many hardships. His eyes burned; his sight was nearly gone; his feet pained continually. The physical effort of writing became doubly difficult; but his intelligence was clear, keen, and strong. His powerful mind had but gained range and certitude through his long practice of turning difficult philosophical subjects over and over: through his grappling with puzzles in cool, leisurely analysis until their elements lay before him as simple axiomatic principles.

Brownson's mind had grown in power of penetration, through the years. Between the ages of sixty-one and seventy he wrote (besides his essays in the *Ave Maria* and

the *Catholic World*), *The American Republic; Papacy and the Republic; Dollingerites, the Nationalists, and the Papacy; Bismarck and the Church; Papal Infallibility; Gallicanism and Ultramontanism; Papal Infallibility and Civil Allegiance; Newman's Reply to Gladstone; The Church and Civil Power*; and *Philosophy of the Supernatural*.

Even later, he wrote his *Refutation of Atheism* concerning which the Rev. Joseph P. Donovan, C.M., says:

"Brownson, at the entrance of the Church, in 1843 and early in 1844, was toiling for data to build a science of epistemology, a science that Noel contends is not yet formulated. Then, thirty-two years later, in his formal attempt to refute atheism, Brownson endeavored to achieve what Maritain maintains is a problem as yet unsolved by New Scholasticism, namely to carry back the principles of St. Thomas, on knowledge, far enough to meet scientifically (and not merely popularly), the objection raised by Kant and all modern subjectivism.

"After first stating, like a prophet of common sense of all the ages, that the existence of God is in possession and that the atheist can never oust that presumption, because the truth of God's existence is so interwoven with the valid processes of human reason that its denial logically resolves itself into a negation of a negation, or an affirmation, is equivalent to a contradiction, or an assertion that evidences itself, Brownson proceeds to demonstrate the existence of God from an analysis of the elements of thought, drawing out their implications explicatively, not illatively, until he reaches the triumphant conclusion that Real Being at once Personal and Necessary exists, and is the Creator of the Universe and Founder of the moral order. . . . Nor does the forward sweep of reasoning ever lose sight of such concrete realities as the

human soul and its Maker linked by the inescapable fact of thought. . . . Brownson thus showed in his old age the same acumen to deal with the alpha and omega of philosophy that in his young manhood he had exhibited in mastering the thought systems of the ancient and modern world and at times re-stating them with more persuasiveness than their authors had first attained."

Every article named in the list of Brownson's latest works signifies long, earnest hours of labor. Enemies were watching for a slip of his pen; but, when they pounced upon what looked like a mistake, they found their own judgment in error. Brownson wrote, also, a number of articles on *Woman's Rights*. His lines of reasoning did not follow the usual paths adhered to by the speakers of his day. He had nothing to say about crowding men from gainful positions and wrecking the economic balance; he did not claim that woman was either inferior or superior to her husband and brother. He made no reference to her physical strength, her variable temperament, or her sensitive qualities.

Brownson's decision was founded upon more deeply rooted principles. He opposed woman's suffrage because he believed that she could not hold, at one and the same time, the advantages of both sexes. She would of necessity, and not through the volition of any persons, lose the advantages of the one when she took on the privileges of the other. He believed that both men and women ought to be better than they are; he believed, too, that their fortunes ought to be better. But he considered it sheer folly to suppose that political suffrage for women would rectify matters.

Furthermore, Brownson's highly developed word-sense brought him to challenge the word "rights" in the claim of suffragettes. He declared that neither suffrage nor eligi-

bility is a "right" of any person. Suffrage is, he said, a trust or a franchise bestowed by the sovereign people upon whom it will.

Also, Brownson saw that chivalry would diminish in proportion as woman encroached upon the sphere accepted as that of man; and he considered gallant homage a necessity in a healthy, natural, manly age. It is in the taking of this from man, rather than his salary, that Brownson considered woman's suffrage an injustice. He refused to believe that the ups and downs of life can be prevented by legislation; that social or moral evils could be cured or lessened by extension of suffrage.

Women are needed, according to Brownson, not as men but as women. Had God foreseen the need of more men, He, mayhap, would have created them. The usual woman is expected to possess a sympathetic nature, quick sensibilities, patience, endurance, and passive courage. These qualities, along with a natural perseverance in following details, fit her, more than her husband, to train the young. To aid best the growth and development of a child mind, someone must sense its psychology, and be vitally interested in its welfare. This person should not have other major occupations such as support of the family, or legislation for the general benefit.

Such were Brownson's opinions; yet he believed that women wanted suffrage, and would obtain it. It would come, logically, he believed, about a quarter of a century beyond his lifetime, and it would be followed, in another twenty years or so, by a wave of crime, throughout the nation, perpetrated by young criminals. This came to pass. It is difficult to grasp the paradox in Brownson, wherein his judgment of political trends and their consequences is unerring, and his likelihood to blunder in practice among political men is equally unparalleled.

In all Brownson's intimate, personal contacts there ensued friction and disappointment, and he remained

doubtful of the actual apostolic value of his *Review*. He felt that, when he most satisfied Catholics, he lost the Protestant audience which he most desired to hold:

"In the earlier volumes of our *Review* we wrote not a few articles against Protestants and unbelievers in favor of Catholicity, which were perfectly satisfactory and conclusive to our Catholic friends, but which had little or no effect upon those who held the errors we labored to refute, except to puzzle or bewilder them. There was something not unjust in their reply: 'Your arguments are logical; they are well put; they silence, but they do not convince.' They did not convince any who needed to be convinced, for the simple reason that we did not distinguish their truth from their error, and show them that we held the very truth they in their own minds saw, and held it in its unity and integrity free from their error."

Even Father Hecker, whose child-letters Brownson preserved to the end, quarreled with Brownson; and, finally, on a false charge, denied him space in the *Catholic World*. Did Brownson expect too much? Or did his friends give too little? And why?

The *Catholic World* difficulty would seem to have followed a period of four years of absolute harmony, and another four wherein existed a strained relation between the editor, Father Isaac Hecker and Orestes A. Brownson, his most valued contributor. The first contributions were translations accepted without dispute. But as the magazine began to carry Brownson's philosophical, controversial, and scientific essays, occasion arose for difference of opinion.

Brownson writes of this to his son in February, 1868:

"Father Hecker and I have had a fight, but it is over now. It grew out of his rejecting one article, and mutilating another, because my views conflicted with

some views on original sin, published by Father Hewit in the *Problems of the Age*. . . . As I expressed my views in the words of the Council of Trent, I trusted it would pass. But no, Father Hewit might contradict the Council of Trent, but nobody in the *Catholic World* must contradict Father Hewit, whose orthodoxy on more than one point is more than suspected. . . . Father Hecker was sick for a week from the scolding I gave him, and we are good friends again. I shall not be surprised if Father Hewit, who is really a holy man, modifies at least the expression of his doctrine, which you will find in Vol. IV, pp. 528-530."

Again he complains:

"The only trouble I have grows out of the fact that Father Hewit is not sound on the question of original sin, and does not believe that it is necessary to be in communion with the Church in order to be saved. He holds that Protestants may be saved by invincible ignorance, and that original sin was no sin at all except the individual sin of Adam, and that our nature was not wounded at all by it. Father Hecker agrees with him on these points, and is in fact a semi-pelagian without knowing it."

A Hecker letter dated March 19, 1868 speaks for itself:

"It gives me pleasure to hear that your health is better. . . . I shall be glad to have the opportunity of settling the difficulties which have recently sprung up. Our opinions on the effect of the Fall . . . undoubtedly do differ; but not to an extent that we cannot work together. I shall expect to see you at your earliest convenience. Your article in the *Church Review* is in my opinion one of the best of its kind which has ever come from your pen. . . ."

Within a week he is writing:

"I feel a great interest in the reply to Bacon, and satisfied that it is in the right hands. Your article on *Rome and the World* has been translated into French and published in the *Revue Générale*, of Brussels."

In 1869, the editor was writing, "The *Woman Question* will be the first in the May number, and the one, *Pope or People*, is terse, pointed, perfect. . . ." But in February, 1870, he wrote from Europe; and Brownson's comments to his son are eloquent of his attitude toward Hecker's minute direction as though to an incompetent mind:

"Father Hecker wrote me from Rome the outlines of an article on *Church and State* for me to fill in for the *Catholic World*. . . . You may be sure I did not fill out Father Hecker's outlines. I have written the article in my own way. It expresses my own views, which I think agree well enough with Father H's, if he only knew his own mind and could express it. . . .

"I was glad you liked my book. They are already printing a Second Edition, I am told. Father Hecker made a mistake when he showed a reluctance to publish it in the *Catholic World* for which I originally wrote it. . . ."

To Father Hewit, acting editor, he wrote:

"Will write the article on *Education* you have requested, if my eyes get better and you do not in your wrath countermand it. Father Hecker and I have had some doctrinal quarrels. . . . I differ from you on the question of realism and nominalism, on original sin, and probably on the doctrine of exclusive salvation. You follow the Jesuit theologians; I follow rather the Augustinians. . . ."

Later he chides Father Hewit for editorial revision of his essays:

"My articles are of course subject, . . . to your editorial revision . . . ; but I am rather particular in my choice of terms, and a little sensitive to verbal changes; for the change of a single term is not unlikely to change my whole sense, and upset my logic. From what I have read of your writing, I think I am more nice and exact in the use of terms than you are yourself, and that you do not always attach the same value to single words that I do. I would more willingly submit to your doctrinal corrections than to your verbal changes, . . . "

By the end of January, 1871, Brownson had decided to discontinue his contributions to the *Catholic World*. Father Hecker wrote a lengthy letter attempting to persuade his old director to remain with the work:

"Whatever value you may attach to my judgment of the sincerity of my friendship for you, believe me that this is a matter of most serious consideration in the presence of God, before you leave this great field of doing good, and give up the privilege of leading and directing the Catholic mind of our country.

"I have never known you to falter in what you considered your duty, and whatever may be your deliberate conclusion in this matter, the high esteem and sincere friendship which I have borne for you now nearly forty years, will be none the less, or in no way affected.

"As ever yours faithfully and affectionately  
"I. T. Hecker."

Brownson stayed on, for some months, with the *Catholic World*, then; but, by August, he was convinced that there was real danger to his standing as a Catholic, if he

continued. Because of its damaging consequences in pronouncing Brownson an ontologist, the *Catholic World* difficulty must be included at some length. All articles in its pages were unsigned; but the regular readers recognized Brownson's style. The fact that Father Hewit maintained his right to change an occasional word or footnote became a serious worry to the essayist.

Thus, in a contribution entitled *Christianity and Positivism*, Brownson said it was erroneously supposed that he and Gioberti held ideal intuition to be formal intuition of Being. He appended a footnote defining their real doctrines on this point. The note Father Hewit thought well to omit, and he explained to the author in a letter dated August 2, 1871:

“The note on Gioberti I think is inadvisable. The real point is sufficiently brought out in the text, and will be understood by those who are capable of understanding a longer explanation. The rest may be left to their own forgetfulness. I have preserved the note in case you may want to use it elsewhere. . . .”

This struck fire from the old Doctor in an immediate reply:

“I am not quite sure that I like the omission of my note. . . . I have no doubt that in omitting the note you have done what was best for yourself; for you had really maintained a proposition which the Holy See had censured,—which I never had done, though I was accused of doing it. If I recollect aright, the ideal formula, in the sense ascribed to Gioberti and Dr. Brownson, is modified and rejected in the text, which leaves me in a false position without the explanation given in the note. I am apparently censured, or suffered in the text, to lie under a false charge; for I never held any different view of ideal intuition

from that given in the article with which you express yourself satisfied. If you strike out the note . . . you should strike out all allusion to Gioberti, and to me, in the text. I have never fallen, since a Catholic, on the point in question, into an error the Holy See has censured. My *Review* will show you that I was never an ontologist; and always held that true philosophy is a synthesis of the ontological and the psychological. . . .

"I have read carefully the propositions of the Louvain professors, M. Branchereau, and now Mgr. Hugonin. My *Review* censured them as unsound, long before the Holy See had censured them, but principally for their pantheistic tendencies. Fathers Ramiere and Kleutgen show that ontologism is censured because it asserts immediate intuition or cognition of God, a point I did not hold. . . . These Fathers are right in their assertion that ontologism is censured, but are we thence to conclude that . . . the ontological is logically deducible from the psychological? . . . that psychologism is approved and must be held? . . . I claim to be a Thomist in both theology and philosophy, and I follow him, but I try to understand him. . . .

"Yet you surprise me by approving my article on McCosh after having disapproved my article on *Ontologists and Psychologists*: for, if I understand myself, both articles maintain one and the same philosophy, which is substantially that of St. Anselm in his *Proslogium*. . . ."

Several letters followed. Brownson was severely criticised; and his answer was a request to lay his statement beside that of St. Thomas, and to ask in what essentials they differ. He reiterates:

"I have fallen into neither of the errors of ontologism improbated by the Holy See, for I hold that the

human intellect is a created light, and that we have neither immediate cognition nor immediate intuition of God; and attain to a knowledge that God is, only mediately, mediantibus universal and necessary ideas, or the ideal. . . .

"Yet I am not able to understand why the *C. W.* is closed to me, and open to the same philosophy which I defend, in Father De Concilio . . . but the editor has a perfect right to open and shut to whom he will, and I am not the man to dispute it."

The fact of the matter seems to be that the *Catholic World* had met ecclesiastical censure. Then, since no article had been signed by any author, Brownson was cited for blame. The law of self-preservation is strong in humanity, whether in matter of physical safety or of reputation. Father Hewit was not the first drowning man to strangle the swimmer next to him. There was no malice in the act. It was a desperate impulse toward personal escape. But since that day, Brownson's name continues to be associated with ontologism despite all his assertions to the contrary, despite his repeated refutation of charges, and despite his former challenge to admitted ontologists. He still errs, in the minds of critics, "through his notions of immediate intuition."

Henry Brownson thinks that,

"It was due to itself, [*The Catholic World*], to the public, and to Brownson personally, that it should have . . . corrected this false impression, especially since it persistently refused to suffer him to do it, and to set himself right before the public in its own pages."

In the field of neither politics nor religion can be accurately gauged the degree to which the earnest efforts of Orestes A. Brownson influenced the minds of his public; but there is no doubt about the fact that he kept the leaders of both the nation and the Church very much awake.

Mrs. Brownson had not been satisfied with her husband's position as contributor to magazines not his own. Now, after the serious consequences of the Hewit blunder, Sally declared it to be his duty to himself, as a vindication of his own honor as a Catholic, to his surviving children, and to the Church itself, to revive his own magazine. The financial worries of managing such a publication could not compare, she believed, with the risks and sufferings consequent upon experiences such as he had recently undergone with the *Catholic World*.

And, since he had come to rely more and more upon his wife's judgment, he determined to undertake the work. On March 25, 1872, he wrote his son Henry, married, and living in Detroit:

"I have finally resolved to revive my *Review*,—  
*Brownson's Quarterly Review, Last Series, Vol. 1,*  
*No. 1.* . . . There are looming up any number of  
questions on which I wish to have my say . . . I want  
also to place myself rectus in curia before I die, for  
the sake of the cause, for the sake of my children and  
my grandchildren, which I could not do in the *C. W.*,  
and cannot do in the *Tablet*. Do not try to discourage  
me, but speak encouragingly."

Henry welcomed the idea of the *Review*'s coming back; and he planned upon writing a long letter telling (besides his good wishes, and congratulations concerning the project) a few details about his own happy home. Before he got to it, a hurried line arrived to say that his mother was seriously ill; that what had looked like a severe cold had turned to pneumonia. In less than another week, Sarah Healy Brownson was dead.

Orestes was crushed with grief, and utterly lost without the beautiful companion who had for forty-five years sincerely worshiped him, becalmed his furies, and sustained his hopes. He had pronounced her a valiant woman of unobtrusive virtues; and he said that, over and over again,

to guests who quietly came and went. It was pathetic to see a stricken giant reduced to a pained and brooding figure.

Mrs. Brownson had been the only human being who had completely understood the blunt, kindly man. She had stood with him during the repeated accusations that had been brought against him. She had valued his sterling qualities the more, because she alone knew all of them. His growl and his brisk ways meant to her only his mood and his weariness. He had needed her counsel, her sympathy, and her encouragement. She was the only person on whom the strong man had ever depended without disappointment. She had mothered him, set out his clean shirts, sponged spots from his suits, and cooked the dishes that he liked for his table.

For her dear sake, in October, 1872, Brownson revived his *Quarterly* in what he named, from its initial number, *The Last Series*. Brownson's personal enemies were dead; old party resentments were forgotten, and the field was open for him to claim. But he was seeking peace, and his purpose was now to repair any scandal that weak brethren might have taken from statements made during some of his disputes with churchmen:

"I revive, then, my *Review*, because I wish to set myself right before the Catholic public; to vindicate my honor as a loyal though unworthy son of the Church; to prove that I have no sympathy with my former friends who resisted, or still resist the decrees of the Council of the Vatican. . . . I revive it because I wish to protest against what goes by the name of Liberalism, whether in religion or politics, and to prove myself a true papist, . . . I also revive it because there are coming up every day great and vital questions for discussion in which I wish to take part, and in which I cannot take the part I wish without an organ under my own control, through which I can

speak in my own name, and on my own responsibility, subject only to the ecclesiastical authorities . . . as a loyal Catholic."

In a letter to the *New York Tablet*, which was copied into many other journals, Brownson announced that the *Last Series* would begin in January, 1873. The response was gratifying. Bishops, priests, and laymen wrote their hopes and blessings toward its success. After the first number, Bishop Corrigan sent a letter: "I am delighted with the ring of the articles."

Brownson was nearly seventy when he revived the *Review*, and it must have been satisfying to the old warrior to feel the response from throughout the United States and Canada. Letters of praise and joy at the prospect of meeting him again in his own journal poured in, and editorial notices proudly welcomed the elderly warrior back in the field. A reply, in the *Catholic Advocate*, to a Brownson article in praise of Archbishop Spaulding in the January *Review* for 1874 is here appended. The *Advocate* says:

"Whilst we also appreciate the services of the late Reverend Doctor Spaulding in lifting the countenances of Catholics from their time-out-of-mind cringingness to brute force, we are disposed to assign, as the chief instrument in God's hands, not His Grace of Baltimore, but Dr. Brownson himself. It is meet that this should be hidden from the Hercules of American controversy, but it is not meet that we who are benefited by this more healthy tone should be forgetful of him to whom, under God, it is mainly attributable. Thirty years back dates the commencement of this revival, and thirty years back O. A. Brownson began his career as the chief Catholic journalist of America. The coincidence in dates alone points the cause. . . .

"At his feet, more than at those of any other man that taught America, have the Catholic Bishops sat

to hear words of wisdom on the relative position of things divine and things human in this country. . . . And to him is due the honor of creating a line of Catholic political literature in this country which was absolutely necessary for the education of our clergy and intelligent laity, and which has no ante-type in any other country. . . . Brownson has been an eminently providential man."

As he read that praise, Brownson wanted to share his joy with Sally. In fact he was so carried away that he turned to call her, forgetful for a moment that she was beyond call. By a stroke of good fortune, he had arranged for a very life-like portrait of his wife, only two years previously. He wanted it brought up to his own quarters now, and expressed this wish to Sarah. This became the occasion for the first quarrel between the father and daughter. The balance wheel of the home was gone; and things would never again run in perfect harmony. Each felt a need that the other could not satisfy. For every trial that either had suffered, there had come, from within the home circle, balm that made the painful incident a passing thing. And because the present heartache came to abide within them both, they felt an irritability and bitter blame, each for the other.

Brownson saw in Sarah, for the first time, the independence and self-will which was as natural to his daughter as were the curls that would not be bound in her tight-done hair. Sarah saw her father to be less particular with his dress, and more disorderly with his possessions, than he had ever been. She saw no new duty, in this regard, devolve upon herself. She was merely annoyed. Why his reading matter was not in neat piles upon tables, as it had always been, remained a mystery to her. And she wished that he did not chew tobacco.

And, there was another thing. Brownson's old friend, Judge Tenney, who had called every Sunday for eight

years, and was Brownson's convert to Catholicism (although his father was the Rev. Caleb Jewett Tenney), had lost his wife about a year before Mrs. Brownson's death. He also was lonely. Usually, Tenney met, a block or two from the Brownson home, Biarnois du Pont, an old woolen merchant who was also en route to see their mutual friend. Together they entered, like members of the family. Brownson could still enjoy an old man's gratification at being the center of interest. In his wheel chair, he listened for the voices of his friends, and called a welcome to them as they reached the bottom of the stair. They went directly to the second floor, where they spent the afternoon and evening.

Now, the widower was sixty-two years old, and Sarah was thirty-four. It had never entered Orestes Brownson's head that Sarah had even slipped into her thirties. She was still a little girl to him; and, though she had many friends, she had cultivated few sweethearts. Certainly, if she were considering marriage, it would be with a man more near her age. The first Sunday that Tenney remained on the first floor for a visit, and permitted Biarnois an hour's start in the day's controversy, Brownson asked his friend whether he got lost downstairs.

At first, it seemed to him kind of the Judge, to be thoughtful of the grieving child. He ached to regain touch with her himself. Brownson was slow to see that the charity practiced by Tenney was love, with an eye to marriage; he was slower to see that Sarah Brownson looked forward to Judge Tenney's calls more than he did. He opposed the marriage. This, if it had any effect, precipitated the ceremony. His close friend and his only daughter were married in St. Michael's Church by Bishop Corrigan on November 26, 1873.

They took their wedding tour in Massachusetts; and Brownson, no longer to be the center of interest, sat home with a cook and a Negro servant, lamenting his lot.

The returning couple went, at first, to another home;

and only later, moved in with Brownson. He had been ordering the food of his choice; but Tenney's taste, not his, now governed the table. The father was unhappy. He welcomed the first child, Ruth, with enthusiasm, however; and things looked for a time to be mending. But Sarah's health was failing. Her doctor had warned her concerning risks; and she had disregarded his counsel. With the awful conviction that she would not live a year, Sarah wrote Henry and insisted that he take their father to Detroit.

Brownson did not wish to go; but when "Francis" came on for him, he yielded; and he placed a note in Sarah's hand as he said goodbye:

“Thursday.

"I am very sorry, my dear Sarah, that I showed so much resistance to the arrangement that you and Henry thought the best. I am now perfectly satisfied that you were right. And I want you to feel that I am perfectly convinced of it, and am perfectly reconciled to the arrangement.

"You need, and must have, a change of scene, and a change of air; and the sooner the better. This is absolutely necessary, and must not be delayed many days. I am anxious only for you. I shall do well enough, and shall not be unhappy. You need feel no uneasiness on my account.

Your loving Father.”

It was for the best; for Sarah did not live long. In October, 1875, Henry took his father to his home in Detroit. He tried to care for him, there, in such a way as to make him forget Elizabeth, N. J., and the habits that had come to make up his life. He had all his books and files of letters sent on; he got him another wheel chair; and he appointed his quarters on the second floor. There he lived, and came down only when he liked, and for his meals.

Brownson was comfortable; and he was fond of Henry's

children. He invited them to his room; and they sometimes played there quietly while he was assembling notes for what was to become *The Autobiography of Orestes Augustus Brownson*. Now and again arguments begun between the journalist father and the lawyer son, at the supper table, were resumed after each had retired for the night, on different floors. As both of the participants had voices like modified thunder, such occasions delayed the slumber of the non-belligerents in the household.

But the *Autobiography* was not to be finished, or even well begun; and the arguments were not to last long. Brownson lived only until Easter, 1876. On Holy Saturday, at the noon meal, there came a difference of opinion between Henry and his father, about some phase of doctrine concerning the Holy Ghost. Henry's wife and children finished their dinner and cleared the table. Both men remained oblivious of the passage of time until their renewed hunger was aroused by the odors of supper in preparation. It was after five o'clock.

Pronouncing the afternoon a complete loss, the old Doctor shoved back his chair, and hobbled painfully toward the stair. He could not decide whether the dull vision of Francis in the matter was from stupidity or sheer stubbornness. With the aid of the banister and his cane, he moved slowly up the stairs for the last time. Mrs. Brownson rapped at his door after she had prepared his tray; and a voice from within answered: "If that is Henry, I'm too tired to make it any plainer, tonight."

He took a cup of tea; but he was seriously ill before midnight, and unable to hear Mass on Easter Sunday morning. Father Anciot, pastor of St. Ann's Church and Vicar-General of Detroit, attended his death-bed, and administered the Last Sacraments of the Catholic Church to Brownson. After he was gone, Brownson chuckled, as he lay back looking at the ceiling, and said, "He sifted me well, and I'm glad." Before the next dawn broke, he had gone to meet Absolute Truth, the goal of his search.

## CHAPTER XVI

### Monumenta

ORESTES A. BROWNSON, dead, was brought for burial services to the Church of St. Ann, in Detroit; and interred in the quiet Catholic cemetery of Mount Elliott, there. The events brought little comment from the hungry tongues that had spread alarm concerning Brownson the strong man of American letters, Brownson the unpleasant critic and sledge-hammer controversialist, Brownson the stern and active examiner of claims, economic, political, and religious. From various quarters, and from varied aims, the hope that he would rest doubtless found expression.

He had not lived long enough to claim the *Laetare* Medal presented annually by the University of Notre Dame. Seven years after his death, that custom was inaugurated. In recounting the first ceremony of award, Timothy E. Howard says of the first medalist, John Gilmary Shea, ". . . after Orestes A. Brownson, undoubtedly the most distinguished American Catholic layman who has given his genius to the Church."

The University gave him no medal; but it identified itself with him by removing Brownson's revered remains to Notre Dame, and reinterring them in the main aisle of the lower chapel of Sacred Heart Church. It was a solemn ceremony, the placing of Brownson's body in the crypt of Brownson Memorial Chapel, in June, 1886, after the Solemn Mass of Requiem and the eulogies were done.

It was symbolic of his life, his resting elsewhere first, and then being called and carried into the Church itself; his despising of the stillness of the churchyard, and his

choosing to be brought to an active spot where the minds of American youths are earnestly working out their problems amid prayer. It was Brownsonian, that move to repose before the altar in a Catholic college for young men. Did the humble quality of the modest chapel draw him? It is a holy place, breathing deep peace and triumph, the quiet, lowly chapel beneath the lofty church. Peace emanates from the sanctuary; a spirit of tranquility pervades the very air, and lingers in and about the epitaph on the simple slab of marble marking the resting-place of the Catholic publicist:

HIC JACET

ORESTES

A

BROWNSON

QUI VERAM FIDEM HUMILITER AGNOVIT  
INTEGRAM VIXIT VITAM  
CALAMO LINGUAQUE  
ECCLESIAM AC PATRIAM  
FORTITER DEFENDIT  
AC LICET MORTI CORPUS ABIERIT  
MENTIS OPERA SUPERSUNT  
IMMORTALIA  
INGENII MONUMENTA

The University of Notre Dame has in its archives thousands of manuscripts from and to Brownson; it has in its library a complete set of his *Review*, and all his *Works*.

Norwich University of Vermont, and Fordham of New York, have records of their presenting the living Brownson with an LL.D. George P. Healy made an oil portrait in 1863 in the hope of going "down to posterity tacked on Brownson's skirts." On February 10, 1863, the picture left Chicago, and Healy forwarded to a New York address his

receipt from the express office, and wrote a letter to Brownson to relate his satisfaction in the work:

“After you left us I discovered I had the head too large for the body in my picture. I kept yours and have repainted mine, which I now like, and I hope you will also, when you see it in the New York exhibition. . . . The Bishop has been to see your portrait and is pleased.”

The painting placed on exhibition was a popular one, and the artist declared that he was busy for the year following. His letters express repeatedly the personal charm that he felt was a part of Brownson. This painting was inherited by Mrs. Thomas Odiorne [the eldest daughter of Sarah Brownson Tenney] and adorns her home in New York City.

In 1910 the memory of the man was sufficiently alive in New York, for a society calling itself “The Catholic Young Men’s National Union” to erect the Memorial bust (mentioned in the introduction of this book), in Sherman Park Square, in New York City. The Catholic University of America has dedicated a room of the University library to Brownson.

And, in Vermont, Brownson’s native state, there has been erected to the memory of Brownson a monument with a strange history. The granite block is the property of the Knights of Columbus; it is in the village of Stockbridge, but it has literally nothing to stand upon but loyalty and truth. It rests on the property of Mr. Green; and it marks the birthplace of the great convert. The Protestants of the neighborhood have continued to hold such resentment against the influence of the man toward Catholicism that they have prevented actual sale of the ground upon which the block could be placed. The wealthy landowner, because he found his neighbors so incensed at his contract

with the Knights, thought well to hold the deed of the plot of ground in his own possession. The tablet reads:

Orestes Augustus Brownson, LL.D.

Patriot, Philosopher, Publicist

He loved God, country and truth.

Born at Stockbridge, Vermont

September 16, 1803

Died at Detroit, Michigan

April 17, 1876

This monument erected by

The Knights of Columbus of Vermont

Brownson Societies have been formed in cultural circles in Benton Harbor, Indiana (once called Brownson Harbor for the brother of Orestes who lived there), in Fort Wayne, Indiana, and in Chicago. There is hope that a genuine interest in Brownson's work may soon return. The latest memorial in his honor is in St. Rose's Church, in Chelsea, Massachusetts. There was placed, in 1939, a memorial window to commemorate the fact that, before the town boasted a Catholic church, Brownson had Chelsea's first Mass celebrated in his own home.



Date Due

~~NEW RPT~~

~~FE 8- 42~~

~~Ag 28 42~~

~~0 2 42~~

~~FE 13 '51~~

~~MR 13 '51~~

~~FE 13 '51~~

~~MR 13 '51~~

~~FACULTY~~

~~APR 27 1971~~

~~JUN 2 1971~~

~~JUN 15 1970~~

~~JUN 25 1970~~



卷五

B908 .B64W55  
Granite for God's house; the life of

Princeton Theological Seminary-Speer Library



1 1012 00007 8750